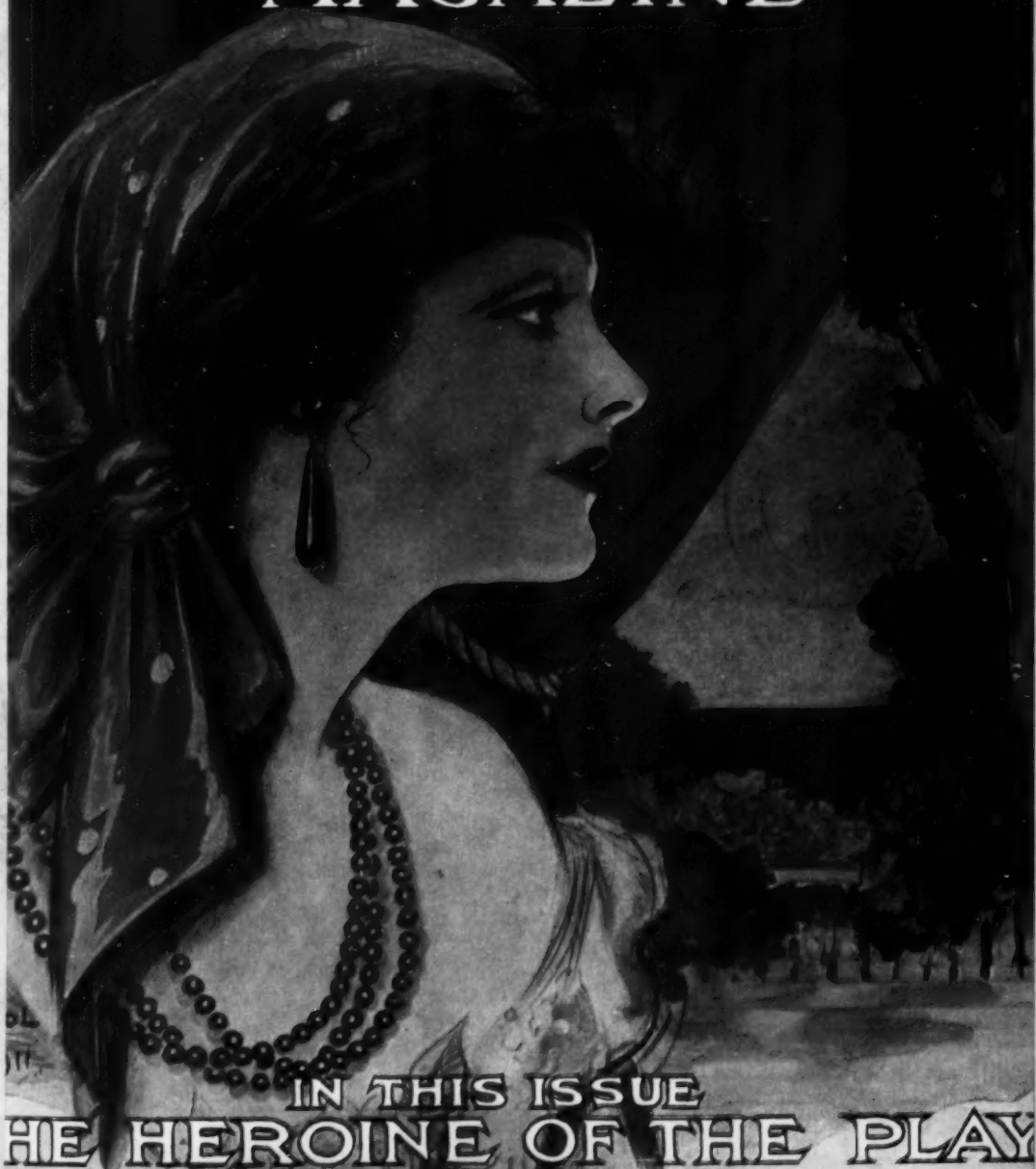


APRIL 1911

STORIES BY EMERSON HOUGH, JOHN LUTHER LONG  
BY GEORGE GIBBS, EMERY POTTLE, ELIA PEATTIE

PRICE 15 CENTS

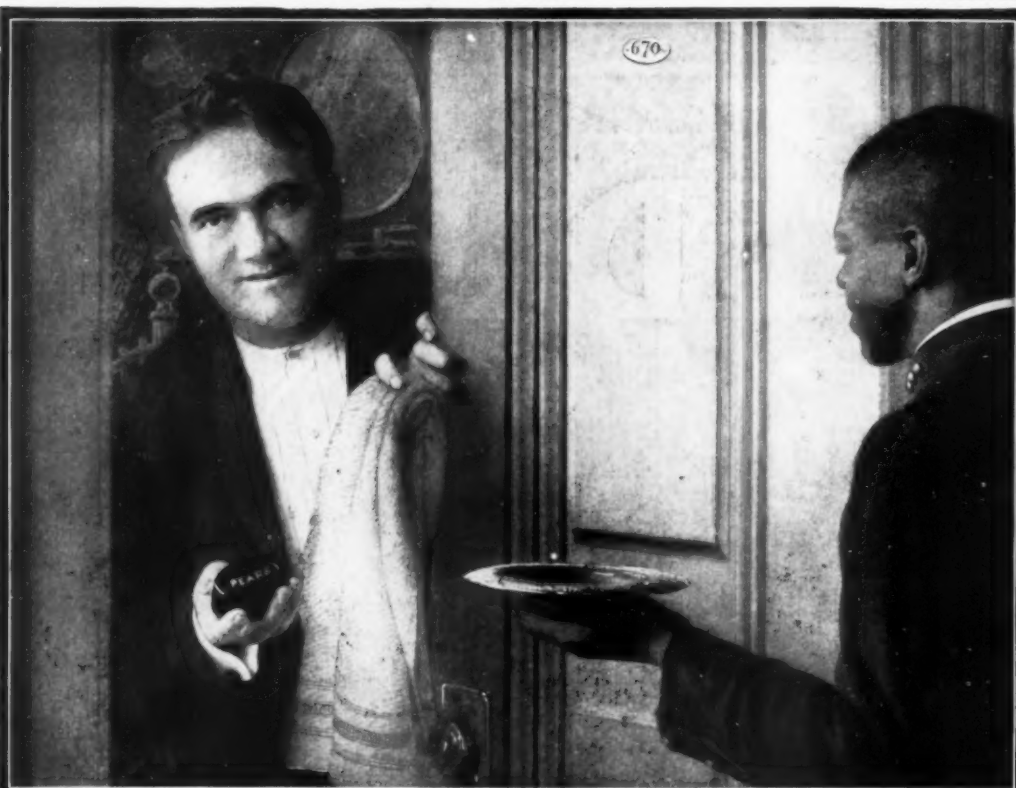
THE  
**RED BOOK**  
MAGAZINE



IN THIS ISSUE

THE HEROINE OF THE PLAY

Published Monthly by THE RED BOOK CORPORATION, 158 to 164 State Street CHICAGO.



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# THE RED BOOK

## MAGAZINE

EDITED BY KARL EDWIN HARRIMAN

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THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE is issued on the twenty-third of the month preceding its date, and is for sale by all newsdealers after that time. In the event of failure to obtain copies at news-stands, or on railway trains, a notification to the Publishers will be appreciated.

Advertising forms close three weeks prior to the time of issue. Advertising rates on application.

THE RED BOOK CORPORATION, Publishers, 158-164 State Street, CHICAGO

LOUIS ECKSTEIN, President

CHARLES M. RICHTER, Business Manager

RALPH K. STRASSMAN, Advertising Manager, 1172 Fifth Avenue Building, New York

R. M. PURVES, New England Representative, 201 Devonshire St., Boston LONDON OFFICES, 5 Henrietta St., Covent Garden, London, W. C.  
Entered as second-class matter April 25, 1905, at the postoffice at Chicago, Illinois, under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879.



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in "Thais"

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MISS LEOTA ARMITAGE  
in "He Came From Milwaukee"  
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"I told her that you were the one woman I knew who could keep a secret"

To accompany "A Venture In Flats"—page 1081

# THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

April 1911

Vol. XVI. No. 6.

## FINE GOLD

BY EMERSON HOUGH

Author of "The Purchase Price," "The Mississippi Bubble," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY GAYLE HOSKINS

**S**ORRY, my dear old chap," said Dr. Ellison, assuming the particular shade of professional air with which he was accustomed to impart disagreeable news, "awfully sorry, but if I were you I would get out of this as soon as possible. If you don't, you'll blow up; and that's all about it."

"Get out of it, Ellison? How *can* I get out of it? Look at that desk." A frown sat on the face of the sturdy man who now faced his physician. The latter only raised a hand.

"I don't want to look at it. I haven't got time to look at it. All I say to you is that a time comes when a man must slow down. Oh, I don't mean to say that you are *old*. I only mean that if you stay here in this grind you will *get* old, some time."

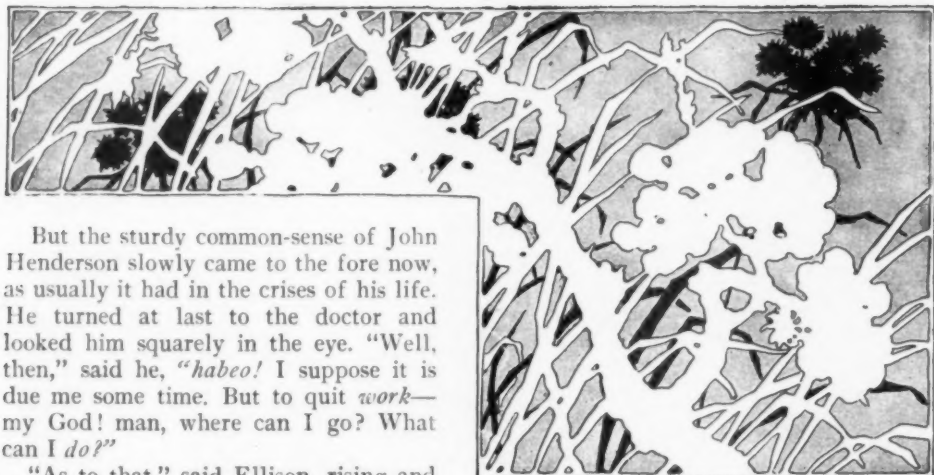
He noted well the red flush that sat on John Henderson's florid face, and went on as best he could to soften the truth. "What's the use, John, anyhow?" he continued. "Your accumulated earnings ought to feed you three meals a day, for some years to come, even if you quit work altogether. Stay here in harness, try to pull the whole load the way you have

been doing, for, say, six months more, and maybe you won't need any more accumulated savings or any more three meals a day. You'll drop, and they'll haul you out. Let that soak through the egotism of your success. It's hard, but we've all got to come to it. You're not exempt any more than any one else. Come now, lay off for six months. Maybe I'll let you go back to work then."

Dr. Ellison's long fingers thrummed nervously on the polished desk top, as he leaned across it towards the man whom he addressed. It was a large, heavy desk, such a desk as goes well with large and heavy incomes. Every suggestion in the furnishings about gave the idea of solidity, permanency. Chance and change seemed eliminated. Success was written here, from the stern, strong, single name on the dead-glass of the front-door to the paintings in the reception-room and the steel card-cabinets in the inner office. No plan had been made for chance or change or ending in this business. Yet now the physician saw the sweat stand on the face of the builder and owner of it all. He shook his own head a little, sadly, as he gazed at his friend.







But the sturdy common-sense of John Henderson slowly came to the fore now, as usually it had in the crises of his life. He turned at last to the doctor and looked him squarely in the eye. "Well, then," said he, "*habeo!* I suppose it is due me some time. But to quit *work*—my God! man, where can I go? What can I *do*?"

"As to that," said Ellison, rising and buttoning his coat, "maybe I can help you. You want dry air, outdoor life, almost anything to eat, and plenty of rest. You might try Arizona or California; I don't pretend to specify. Only, it's you back to the old oaken bucket and your childhood scenes, if you ever had any childhood, which I very seriously doubt. How about your young manhood, John? Where did you live then? Wasn't there some sweetheart in the world somewhere, for whom you could fan up a little transient flame to-day? How about the trail of the Sweetheart, my dear boy?"

Henderson only looked at him in silence, but the physician caught the query in his face, and raising his thin hand in deprecation, went on calmly.

"I'll explain about that, John. Of course I know you have been married, and are a widower, and that your only child died years ago. I have not been so lucky as that, myself—I mean, I never was married at all—Confound it! You know what I mean. But, do you know, I only mentioned this sweetheart matter because I am on my way, myself, back to the hills of Pennsylvania, where I lived when I was younger. You know why? I am going back to see if an old sweetheart of mine is still alive. We parted, somehow, you know, years ago; I don't just remember why. I came on here to New York, and I've been here since. At least, I don't ask you to be any madder than myself. Come now, it's a bargain! Six months, in search of sweethearts, both of us! We will both go back to the times of long ago, when all the

geese were swans, and all the world was young—when we were just starting out. Eh, what?"

Henderson's noncommittal face still fronted him, and it required all Ellison's keenness to catch the first quiver in its lines. But he continued:

"I left the old place when I was twenty-five, and I've scarcely been back since. Where were you, about that time, John?"

"I was in French Flat, California," answered John Henderson, slowly, in his methodical and positive fashion. "I was seeking my fortune in the Golden West at that time. I was full of ginger, hope, confidence, and the general belief that all the world was my oyster."

"You are yet, aren't you, John?" said Ellison, smiling. Henderson shook his head.

"Things were different then," he admitted.

"And wasn't there any girl? But, of course, there couldn't have been, out there at that time."

"Oh, but yes, there *was*!" said Henderson suddenly, wheeling. "Yes, there was!"

Ellison threw back his head with a roar of laughter. "Didn't I tell you!" he exclaimed. "Aren't the specimens of *genus homo* all alike, one with another, and aren't they easy to read? It doesn't take any brains for me to tell where you were and what you were doing at any given decade in your life—it's my business to know. Now tell me, don't I un-



derstand my business? Haven't I advised you well? It is my intention to get you to take some interest in life outside of operating a money-making machine. But tell me about French Flat."

"No," said Henderson, "I wont."

"Or about the girl?"

"No, I wont do that, either. Of course, she is dead long years ago. I can hardly realize that I went out by the Isthmus in the old days, and came back by wagon across the plains. It must have been some one else."

His head dropped as he smote with a large, firm, white hand upon the polished desk top. Both men turned apart in their swivel chairs, Ellison having again dropped into a seat. Both looked blankly and in silence out of the window, across the blue Hudson with its crowded commerce, where ships were passing, passing. At last Ellison again rose, picked up his shining top-hat, which he renewed every week, and his grey gloves, which he renewed every day, and nervously turned toward the door.

"In six months, John," said he, "I will meet you here, if we are both alive. It's really best for you to go."

"It is impossible for me to go," said John Henderson. "That is why I am going."

## II

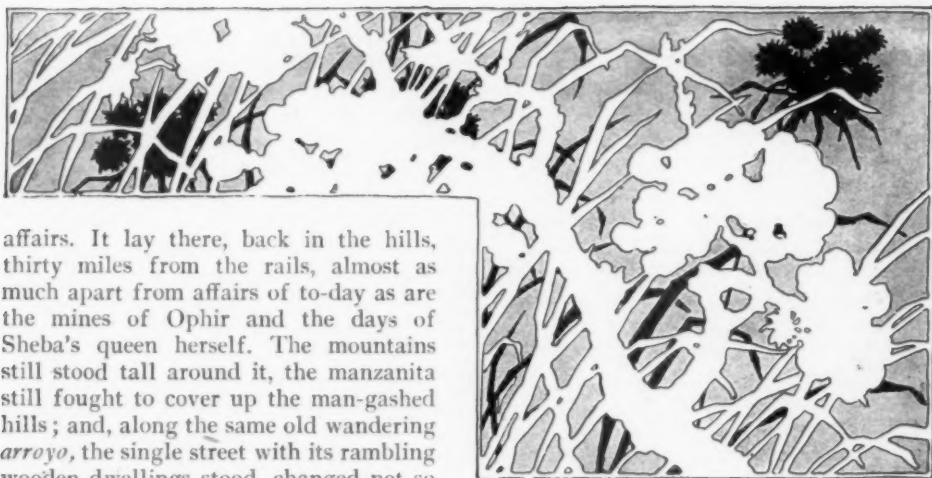
There are still great hills hedging about the little mountain town of French Flat, California; and even now the



rounded ranges still show black under the heavy *chemisal*. In some part, the mountains are as they were in the beginning. And yet, such is the curious inventiveness and power of that insect known as man, there are long reaches of these old hills which are no longer as their Maker made them. Hydraulic mining did its worst here for years, and as a result of it thousands of acres of the once unscarred foothills now lie in long mounds of abandoned detritus, aftermath of the water nozzles, looting these hills for their gold.

The story of this valley was not different from that of others. At first there was a wild rush to the placers along the little creek, until that stream was gutted and cleaned out twenty feet down to bed-rock. The camp roared off on some other stampede after that. Silent Chinamen came in and, using the scant water of the old stream, panned wages out of what others had thrown away. Next it became known that the gold of this valley consisted in large part of fine and delicate particles, which could best be caught on mercury plates, and could most rapidly be got into sluices by the titanic methods of hydraulic mining. Again the camp revived, indeed for some time flourished; until, at last, in the way of change, the great sluices were in turn abandoned, the vast flume over the mountains dried in the sun and fell apart, and in time the patient Chinamen came in again behind the whites, and combed even these combed tailings for the scant remnants of fine gold.

To French Flat there remained for white population only such hangers-on as were interested in timber, sheep, or some one of the new resources which showed as the country became older. In other valleys, along the new railway lines, life and civilization went forward by leaps and bounds, but in some way French Flat, caught in a little eddy of the days, was left out of the current of



affairs. It lay there, back in the hills, thirty miles from the rails, almost as much apart from affairs of to-day as are the mines of Ophir and the days of Sheba's queen herself. The mountains still stood tall around it, the manzanita still fought to cover up the man-gashed hills; and, along the same old wandering *arroyo*, the single street with its rambling wooden dwellings stood, changed not so much as the eternal hills themselves.

To this little, abandoned mining town, whose history lay all in the past, there came one morning on the bi-weekly buckboard which served as a mail stage, a visitor who seemed of another and much different world. Henderson, strong, grizzled, grey, well clad in modern garments of the East and carrying with him even here the unconscious air of command which was part of him, impressed not alone the wrinkled stage driver, but all others of the silent folk whom they encountered thereabout. Between him and these there was scant conversation; and yet, had they read all that was in this grey man's heart, they would not have thought him harsh or brusque to-day. He himself was conscious of a softening, a tenderness of mood such as he had not known for years. His cynicism and self-assurance he had left behind him for the time. Yes, he was coming back; he was going to be young again! He was going to be the same John Henderson who first saw this place almost forty years ago.

He saw it now with a half-gasp and a straightening of his body as the trail turned and swung in between two shoulders of the scarred hills, and opened up to view the narrow curving valley and its ancient mountain town. It had not changed! Here was the very place! Here was the old *arroyo*, shaggy-edged as of old. Yonder was the rotting and abandoned gold-mill, old when he himself had been young. These were the same hills, and yonder were the same moraines

of the hydraulic engines. It was all as he had left it.

It seemed to Henderson the most natural thing in the world that presently the buckboard should draw up at a gray, weather-beaten and tall-fronted structure, which he knew to be the old Doña Ana Hotel. He had boarded there when he was a young man, when he was in turn surveyor, clerk and sheriff for this county, a hundred miles in extent any way a crow might fly.

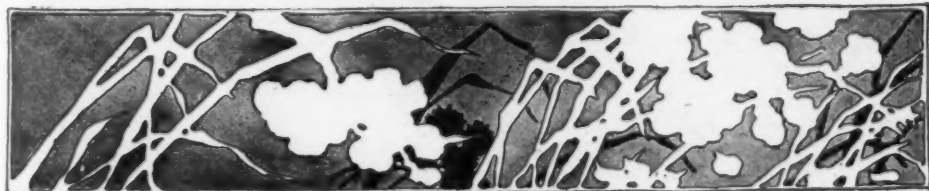
He entered the door as one dreaming, and found himself standing as though some disembodied ghost of another day, for the time alone, in a wide, wooden-walled, dimly-lighted room. Mechanically he stepped over to the pine counter which served as hotel desk. It seemed scarce more scarred and broken than when he last had seen it.

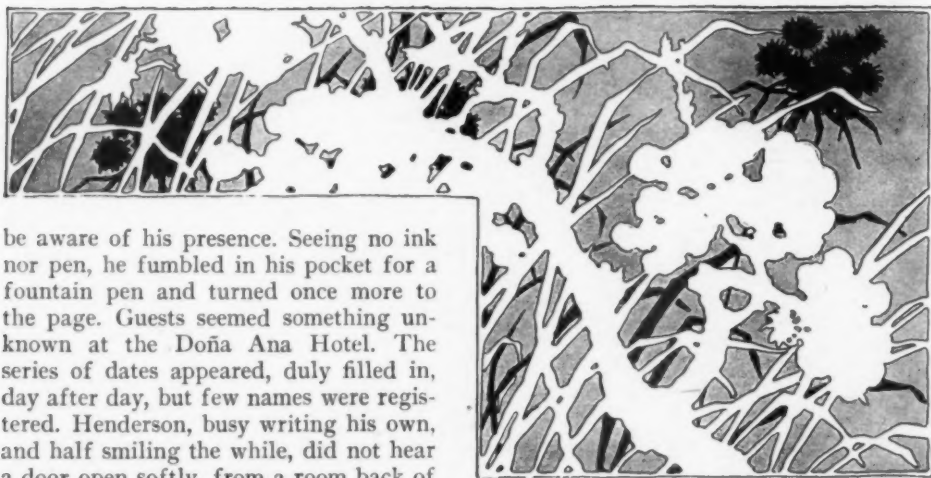
Say what you will, pictures fade, and memories. It cannot be otherwise. If it be true that the world cannot endure the grief of the world, and so must forget, equally true is it that the world may not, dare not, remember its old loves, its old joys, its old blisses. Henderson stood at the hotel desk almost with a sob in his throat, coveting a memory, striving to recall a face! Things in his mind seemed shadowy, vague. With all his might he tried to lay hands upon the past. For the time he dared not trust himself to ask aid in that attempt.

Mechanically he pulled around toward him the dingy book which served as register, no clerk or servant seeming to



Henderson lost no time. "Hands up!" he ordered





be aware of his presence. Seeing no ink nor pen, he fumbled in his pocket for a fountain pen and turned once more to the page. Guests seemed something unknown at the Doña Ana Hotel. The series of dates appeared, duly filled in, day after day, but few names were registered. Henderson, busy writing his own, and half smiling the while, did not hear a door open softly, from a room back of the desk. But slowly, as though not from any use of his own senses, he became conscious of a figure standing there regarding him.

It was a slight, gentle and gray-haired lady, quiet and composed in mien and evidently reserved in speech, for she did not accost him now. She was a white lady, white rather than pallid: her gown was white, her skin was white. Her hands, thin and blue-veined as they showed when she turned the register towards her, were also white. Her whole personality was one of calm and gentleness. There was a certain vague inquiry in her eyes as she raised them now to meet those which stared out at her under the shaggy eyebrows of this new guest at the Doña Ana. There are faces which never get their full answer from life; not in all the years. This face asked: Where, then, art thou?

Henderson stood gazing across at her, his hand still holding the pen. Her eyes unconsciously dropped to the page where he had written his name.

"John!" she gasped.

It was some time before he could pull together. He attempted the easiest line, of jocularity. "Nellie!" said he, his lip trembling in spite of all. "Well, well! Rather a long time, eh? Yes, I'm back again."

But he could make no headway even at jesting. All he could do was to drop his strong hand over the thin and blue-veined one which lay on the page. He led her around to the big rocking chair which stood at the window. As yet

she had said but the one word. All he could say now amid the gulping of his throat was "Well!" and again—"Well! Well!"

The thin throat of the woman herself worked a trifle, and at first she made no attempt to speak. Curiously, oddly, he sat looking at her. Why, she was—old! Her hands were thin. She seemed taller. She was thinner in every way than Nellie used to be. And her hair—why, he, John Henderson, of course had not changed at all; whereas she, the woman he had loved was—this!

He looked again, and something in her face caused his own heart to stop. It *was* Nellie, after all! Now, how could all this be explained? This, then, must be the woman whom he had selected years before, and who had selected him out of all the press of hardy suitors who had besieged her then—why, this was the woman who met him and wept over his wounded arm when he came back from a little sheriffing after one of the Sanchez band of cattle thieves. She had lain in his arms, many a time, and told him of her love, and he had pledged his own, so often, so often. She had been so tender and sweet in those old days, yet so full of fire, of eagerness, of joy in just being alive. And her hair, then, was so soft and dark, her eyes so bright, the blood in her cheeks so riotous. Then, she was a girl for kisses and embraces, for joys and delights, a woman to be loved. And she had loved him. And now, after many years, he had come back.



What John Henderson saw in the gentle face before him caused him to summon himself, his own soul, with all the force of his dominating nature. "By God!" he said to himself through his shut teeth, "I'll not admit it. I'll set the years back. I'll have us both again as we used to be. It's Nellie—I see it—I know it! I am going to live it all over again. I'm not sick. I'm not old. I am going to begin all over again. I'll not admit that this has happened or could happen!"

After a time he spoke to her, a trifle more master of the situation. "It must be fate, dear girl," said he. "Here I am, after all these years. Who'd have thought it?"

"You're a little—different—John," she said, shyly. Her tone, her air, were not those of the wild, self-assured girl he once had known.

"Nonsense!" he rejoined, still decreeing that everything should be as it once had been. "I haven't changed in the least, and neither have you. But I am so glad. You know, I didn't know but you had—"

"That maybe I was—"

"Gone away, you know—"

"Or dead!"

He nodded. "It's almost forty years, you see."

"I've often heard of you," she said, after a time.

He expanded genially under this. "Well, perhaps."

"You see I read the papers," she smiled. "We get the magazines and papers here, and I try to keep track of

things as best I can. I've always tried. I've always known that sometime I would hear of you, somewhere, in some way. I've even dared hope that some time you'd come back. I don't know why."

"But you never wrote to me," he said, brutally. "I couldn't tell where *you* were. You know, you never wrote to me."

"No, to be sure," she said simply. "How could I?"

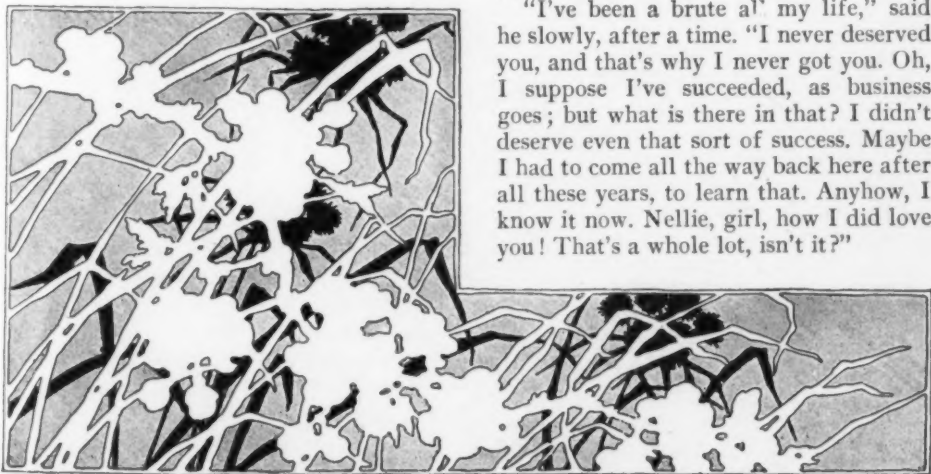
"It was your own fault I ever went away," he broke out.

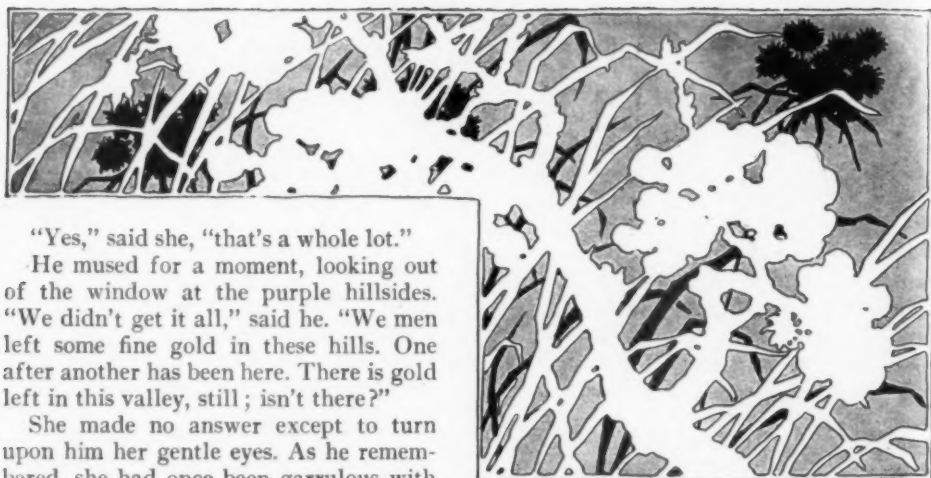
She only shook her head, a faint pink coming into her cheeks again. At length she smiled, however. "I said you had changed, John; but after all, you are much the same!"

"I closed the books when I went away," he resumed. "Maybe I was wrong, but I don't know. Maybe I ought to have waited; I don't know. I didn't wait; I didn't ask; and I did go back to the States to seek my fortune, just as I had left the States to seek it here. But Lord! girl, I loved you. I've never forgotten it."

"Sometimes both are mistaken, John," she said gently. "I didn't have a chance to tell you just everything I felt about it. When a girl is younger, she is prouder, John. Maybe I was too proud. Maybe I was too sure that some one else would do. When a girl is younger, John, she is more apt to flare up and do something foolish, you know. That happens sometimes when she really loves a man, doesn't it? Perhaps we can see these things more clearly now; but once"—she smiled gently—"I was foolish—and—I was young!"

"I've been a brute all my life," said he slowly, after a time. "I never deserved you, and that's why I never got you. Oh, I suppose I've succeeded, as business goes; but what is there in that? I didn't deserve even that sort of success. Maybe I had to come all the way back here after all these years, to learn that. Anyhow, I know it now. Nellie, girl, how I did love you! That's a whole lot, isn't it?"





"Yes," said she, "that's a whole lot."

He mused for a moment, looking out of the window at the purple hillsides. "We didn't get it all," said he. "We men left some fine gold in these hills. One after another has been here. There is gold left in this valley, still; isn't there?"

She made no answer except to turn upon him her gentle eyes. As he remembered, she had once been garrulous with youth and the joy of life. Now she was reticent, slow to speak, given to long silences. But still he went on, resolved to have his way. And, man-like, a very present theme of conversation seemed himself.

"You say you have heard of me? Well, in a way I have got into affairs of late years. I've gathered together quite a bunch of property; and, thanks to the laws of the land, which I did not wholly observe in accumulating it, I will probably keep it for the rest of my life. Nellie, I am worth four million dollars. I have made all of it since I left you here."

"But have you been *happy*?" she asked of him.

"No," he answered, quite as frankly and shortly. "No man is happy who makes money and does nothing else. I used to say to myself that I did it for love of the game, but it wasn't true. I did it for love of *myself*, and that's all about it. Happy? Why, no!"

"But you were married, John."

"Yes. My wife died twelve years ago. A good woman. And yourself?"

She turned her face towards him again, the faint pink deep in her cheeks. "What could a woman do?" she asked. "What *does* a woman do?"

"Yes," he nodded slowly. "She can't do much without a man; sometimes not much with one. Yes, I've made life harder for you, that's true."

"Never mind that now, John," she said. "We were both high-headed enough, I suppose; but after you went away I waited eight years. You didn't come

back. I knew you were married. In time I married Mr. Robertson—oh, he's dead, too, a great many years ago. He was fairly well to do, you know, with ranches and the like, and he owned this hotel. I've sort of settled down here. One doesn't need much, to live here. I have a few friends, not many. Life seems just to run along.

"But let me tell you, although perhaps I ought not to," she went on, the pink in her cheeks deepening, "I can't explain it to you, but somehow I believe I've just been *waiting*, all these years. Why, since you've come here, John, since you've just been sitting here in that chair, I seem sort of *rested*. It doesn't seem to me as though that old feeling of just *waiting* would ever come back now. Although, of course, I know you will be going back to the States again. We had no children," she added after a time, irrelevantly.

He caught the question in her voice and frankly answered. "I had a daughter, and she died, years ago. She wasn't—well, she wasn't very strong, either in body or mind. Maybe there have been happier fellows in the world than myself. I've got little enough out of the fight. I've been living in a country where you have to padlock your pockets, your soul and your heart. I'm all alone in the world. As I look back at it now, it seems that I have always been alone."

They sat in the two wide-armed chairs, looking out through the window at the high hills with their blue, shadowed cov-



ering. He turned to her at length, noting her two thin hands lying empty and idle in her lap. A sudden wave of unaccustomed feeling swept over him. He bent and kissed those hands.

### III

"John," she said to him one day some weeks later, "you are looking better. You will be yourself again before long. I suppose you will be going back again, soon?"

He shook his head stubbornly, with all his old imperiousness. "Never," said he, "until you agree to come with me! I am not going to leave you again."

The same consternation which he noted in her face every time he assumed this attitude with her, again sprang into evidence. "What do you mean, John?" she demanded. "You keep saying that, over and over again. Why, I am an old woman, ugly and ignorant and worn-out. What do I know about managing the sort of place that goes with four million dollars? Could I take up that sort of life?"

"No," he said. "You wouldn't need to. Work and care would be done and past for you. There wouldn't be a thing in the world you couldn't have for the asking. Never mind what's past and gone. Neither of us must reproach the other. We've both been married; but all the time—why, all the time, you know—"

"Yes, all the time, John," she said. "All that time!"

"I can't leave you here," he reiterated. But she shook her head. "What a pity, John," she said, "that it's too late."

"It's nothing of the sort!" he broke out. "No matter what it is, I want you. I'm so awfully alone."

"I'm sorry, John. I don't like to think of you as feeling that way. All alone. It's very terrible."

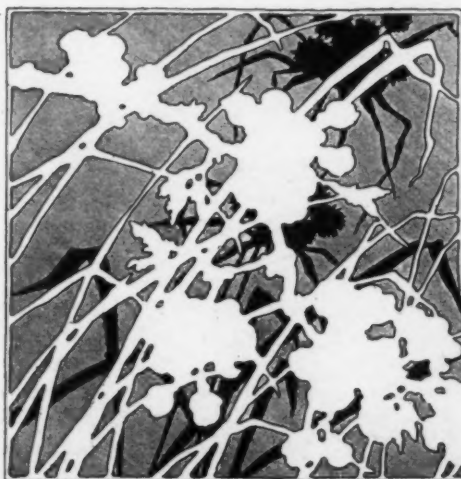
"Then come back with me! Why, dear girl, dear old girl, can't you see that we love each other just as we used to?"

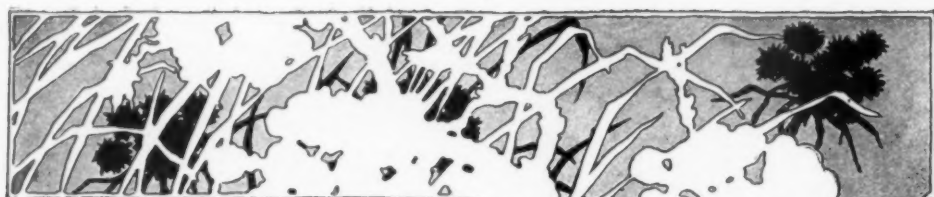
"But *do* we, John?" she cried desperately. "Do we, and can we? That is what troubles me. It comes to me every time I look at the peaks across the valley, and think of the days when you and I both used to gaze at them. You remember the evenings, the nights—the moon, John, when—"

"When we were young? Yes, of course I do. And we are just as young now as we were then. I staked my claim on the road of Life long ago—I located it with all its dips, spurs and angles, fifteen hundred by three hundred, and all the lodes under it from the sky above it to the center of the earth beneath—it's *mine*, and I am going to have it! Every bit of youth, joy and happiness in it is *mine*. I am going to keep on at it until the last deposit is my own. I want every ounce of fine gold that's in my claim—life—love—youth—happiness! Oh, you say I abandoned it! Well, if I did, I've come back to it again. I'll not relinquish one jot or iota of what Life held or ought to have held for me—and you."

"You haven't changed much," she said softly; "not very much. I'll tell you," she added after a while, "we must wait."

"Wait!" The word burst from him almost with the scorn of laughter. "Wait? What time have *we* to wait? You told me to wait then, years ago, and instead of marrying you the first day I saw you I did wait; and what happened?"





And we were both young then, and loved each other. You said 'Wait,' then, almost forty years ago."

"I didn't mean it, John," said she. "I was only a woman. You are older and wiser now; but somehow I am afraid you have been just a little too—literal—all your life, John."

"What is a woman, anyhow?" he demanded, scornful.

"I don't know," she answered frankly. "I don't know any more now that I am old than I did when I was young. Do you?"

"No. It's the same with them as with men—you can't get along with or without them. But here we are, silly as ever, discussing emptiness. Forget all that. I'll go back to New York, or I'll stay here, if you'll only say—"

"Say what, John?"

"That you love me!"

Suddenly she pushed him away from her with her hands, in the old gesture which he well remembered. Her voice dropped to a whisper, holding a quality almost awed, fearful. "Don't ask me, John," she said. "Can't you understand me?"

"No."

"Then you can't see why I say that you ought to wait?"

"No."

She turned to him swiftly, almost with the lightness of girlhood. "Listen," she said. "You will have to wait. You know that to-morrow night we are going to hold the banquet we've planned in honor of John Henderson, our distinguished guest. On the day after that—I'll tell you."

"It's a bargain!" he replied. "I shall hold you to it."

#### IV

That there would be a banquet in honor of John Henderson, distinguished

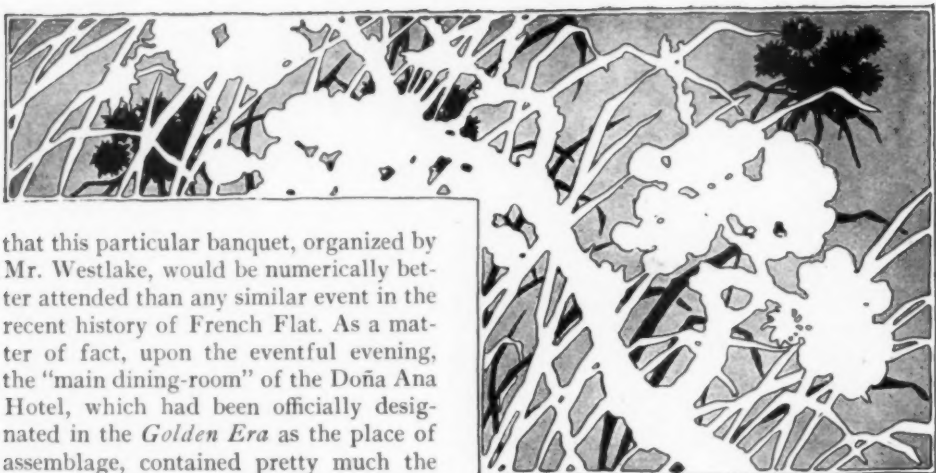
visitor at French Flat, was something in the nature of the absolutely foregone. Especially must this conclusion have seemed inevitable to any who had known Simon Westlake, editor of the *Doña Ana Golden Era*. It was the mission of Mr. Westlake to set forth to such portion of a listening world as lay within his very limited subscription list, the claims of French Flat; to inaugurate banquets upon slight provocation; and to propound at all such banquets, as upon all other available occasions, the certainty of the ultimate arrival of that day when French Flat would again Come Into Her Own. At this particular banquet there might possibly have been a trifle more than usual the *argumentum ad hominem*, for the position of John Henderson in the financial world was something too well-known to be overlooked. Indeed, Editor Westlake had now for five months announced weekly that the presence of Mr. Henderson in the midst of French Flat could be, and was, to be explained upon only one basis. He had heard of the wealth of that fortune-favored valley. He had come thither for the one purpose of investment.

Such was the virtue of this appeal that more than one sheep-herder of those hills recalled an ancient prospect or so of his own, long abandoned, which now he marked up into values such as he had for years forgotten even to dream. Matters being thus, it also was to be supposed



And so, that following night, they walked up the valley again





that this particular banquet, organized by Mr. Westlake, would be numerically better attended than any similar event in the recent history of French Flat. As a matter of fact, upon the eventful evening, the "main dining-room" of the Doña Ana Hotel, which had been officially designated in the *Golden Era* as the place of assemblage, contained pretty much the entire population of French Flat as a community; the same somewhat abashed, awkward and variously clad. It was not often that French Flat contained a man who had made four million dollars in the gilded city of New York. The *Golden Era* always called it forty millions, which was just as well, and not much different in the comprehension of French Flat, whose experience in sudden riches had long since faded out of mind.

In events of this nature, and in a community of this description, organized society becomes a vast commune, neighbors volunteering silver, linen, china, flowers, and the like, and all hastening, each much in the other's way, in the eventful preparations. All this, of course, meant much added concern for the mistress of the Doña Ana Hotel. As best she might, that lady sought fair representation of the resources of the country. One thing Henderson obliged her to accept, and that was a check covering the entire expenses to which the hotel itself would be put. He took a vast delight in aiding in the search for more fruits, more wines of the country, more mountain quail and venison, not to mention beef and mutton and all else. He felt almost a boy as he joined in these preparations, and, though often ordered out, was well nigh as frequently in the kitchen as in his own apartment in the rambling old building.

As for the banquet itself, and the speeches thereof, what need be said? Is it not easy to picture the figure of Editor Westlake at the head of the board, where,

as toast-master, he had the opportunity of making a speech of his own every time he called upon some other citizen to speak? And is it not easy to predict the tenor of each of these numerous oratorical enterprises? Possessed of such a past, possessed of such boundless natural resources, how could be far distant that day when French Flat must Come Into Her Own? Let any man answer that!

I doubt not that this manner of procedure might have lasted until dawn—for the vintages of California are both potent and seductive, and were well represented here—had there not, at an hour past midnight, occurred an incident which for the time put all else in abeyance.

There was a sound of ponderous hoof beats in the street, and the voice of one without demanding entrance. When the portcullis had fallen, and the portals opened, entered now none less than the grizzled driver of the bi-weekly stage, at present excited to the point of incoherence. At length the information was extracted from him that the mail stage had been held up, and the pouches taken, by a lone highwayman, who had stuck him up, the aforesaid stage driver, at the bend of Black Cañon; precisely where Murieta, in his time, and Sanchez in the days succeeding Murieta, had been in the playful habit of sticking up divers and sundry stage-drivers of earlier days. Beyond that deponent could say little.

There was hurrying to and fro, and



cheeks all pale which but an hour ago had blushed at the praise of French Flat's loveliness. Obviously a *posse* ought to be formed, but it was years since a *posse* had been formed in this quiet community. At this juncture it was John Henderson who became the leader.

"Listen here, men," he cried; "come here to the door, a half-dozen of you. Get horses, and come with me. Don't wait."

Great regret now among those who could not find horses; but after all some six or eight soon were mounted, each armed after some fashion. Some one had handed Henderson a heavy six-shooter with belt and scabbard, and as he felt the once accustomed weight upon his hip there came, with some long unused association of ideas, a sort of feeling of comfort and content which he did not pause to analyze.

The bend of Black Cañon is not far from French Flat proper, so it was no long gallop to the point where the abandoned buckboard marked the spot of disaster; the stage-driver had ridden into town on one of his unharnessed horses. Henderson suddenly pulled up and raised a hand to command silence.

"Hold on, boys," he said. "Look yonder!"

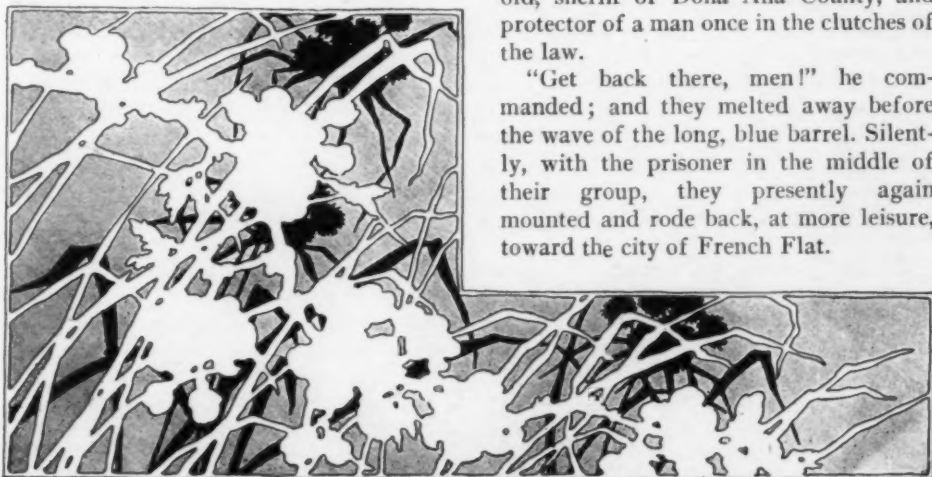
He pointed up the mountain side, where the flame of a camp fire now was apparent to all. "We'll have a look at that," he said in a lower voice. "They probably made a fire there when they examined the mail-pouch."

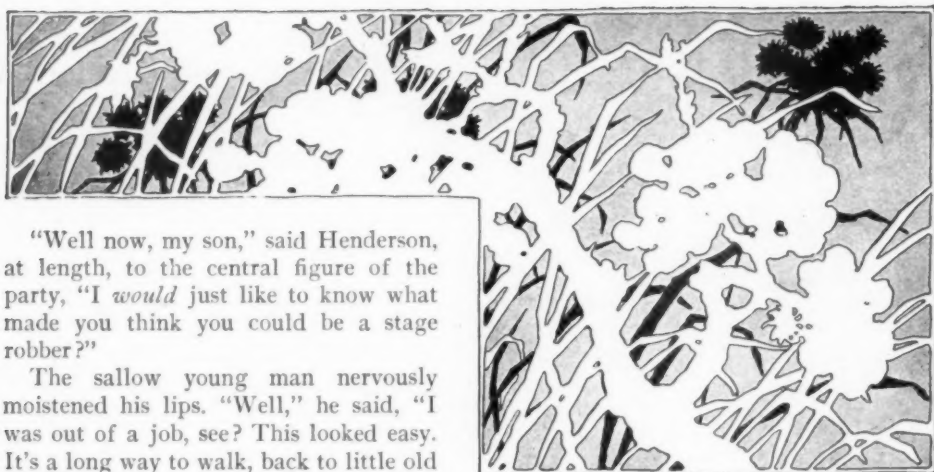
Some one suggested that possibly the robber or robbers had not left the spot, but intended to pass the night there by the fire. Henderson scouted this as impossible, but, while hitching his horse and throwing off his coat, declared that they would soon know the truth about it. Not pausing to see whether his men were following, and only motioning them to be silent, he slipped into the cover, and with the old art which he found he had not forgotten, began silently to make his way toward the fire.

It was rather a strange sight which met him when at length he reached the edge of the lighted circle. A slender, sal-low and somewhat nervous youth sat huddled by the fire, rolling a cigarette, and looking fearfully about him at the surrounding shadows. He looked the part of bandit little enough, but reasoning that he could be no one else, Henderson lost no time. "Hands up!" he ordered, stepping forward easily, and leveling upon the other the long barrel of the six-shooter, which seemed to come into line instinctively as of old.

When at length Henderson called to the others of his *posse* he was surprised to find them so far away; yet they were all for lynching this cowering prisoner when at length they arrived at the fire-side. Henderson had jerked him away, out of the reach of his own wholly modern magazine gun, but again there seemed to come to him, yet more strongly, the feeling that he was John Henderson of old, sheriff of Doña Ana County, and protector of a man once in the clutches of the law.

"Get back there, men!" he commanded; and they melted away before the wave of the long, blue barrel. Silently, with the prisoner in the middle of their group, they presently again mounted and rode back, at more leisure, toward the city of French Flat.





"Well now, my son," said Henderson, at length, to the central figure of the party, "I *would* just like to know what made you think you could be a stage robber?"

The sallow young man nervously moistened his lips. "Well," he said, "I was out of a job, see? This looked easy. It's a long way to walk, back to little old New York."

"New York, eh?" said Henderson; but volunteered no further speech regarding that locality. "Good Lord! son, you ought to have lived here forty years ago. As it is, well—"

Meditatively he slapped the long gun at his hip, comfortably running his hand about the polished wooden stock. Something in the feel of it made him shift in his saddle and pull the gun out of its scabbard. He ran the fingers of his other hand lovingly along the blue barrel, whirled the cylinder. Then suddenly he broke into a peal of laughter which no one present could understand.

"Why look here, you slob of a news-boy bad-man!" said he, turning contemptuously to his prisoner, "this gun isn't loaded! I don't believe it has been in forty years, or could be loaded in another forty. It's an old cap-and-ball six-shooter, the kind the miners used to wear in '49. They had 'em even when I was here long after '49, but I don't suppose there is a bullet mould or a pistol flask within a thousand miles of here. And as for caps—!"

"Just what I said," complained the youth; "I never had no luck."

Seeing that success had crowned the efforts of at least one-half of these arrayed forces, the party became more genial more communicative as they approached the main street of French Flat. The talk of lynching was dropped, and, such is the pendulum of popular opinion, some were now even for raising a purse

to help this poor young bandit on his way back home. In the confusion of events—for Mr. Westlake insisted upon resuming the banquet and completing his last interrupted speech—the prisoner seemed pretty much to be forgotten. Being weary, he presently curled himself down to sleep upon the floor of the "main dining-room" of the Doña Ana Hotel, immune from oratory at least.

It was nearly morning when John Henderson, weary of hearing praises of his bravery, as he had been weary of hearing of his wealth and success in the Financial Centers of the East, left the "main dining-room" and sought his own quarters with the intent of finding sleep. Passing thence he found himself at length alone in the dimly lighted office room. Beyond the desk a faint line of light showed at the edge of the door. The mistress of the hotel had not appeared when the men reassembled after their perilous man-hunt, but Henderson guessed now that she was still awake. He coughed, rapped on the counter, and finally called out "Nellie!" In answer the door opened. She came to him, agitated.

"John," she said, "you're back. You're not hurt, are you?"

He laughed uproariously. "I should say not! It was only a little ten-cent fake of a bad-man who ought to have been spanked—I suppose he's around here somewhere now. But look here, what I had to depend on, in case there had been



any trouble!" He showed her the old-fashioned six-shooter which he had worn. "I don't know how I accumulated this," he said, "but I seemed to have it on when I got into the saddle."

"Don't you know it, John?" she asked.

"By Jove! Yes, I do," he rejoined. "I suspected it. It's the old gun I had when I was sheriff here. Old Reliable, eh? And it was you that handed it to me?"

"You left it here when you went away, John. I found it, and I've kept it, ever since. It was the only thing I had that had belonged to you—a strange thing for a woman to keep, I know. I saw you once come back with it, and you were hurt. I was afraid you might be hurt now. But you—you could always take care of yourself, couldn't you?"

"I've tried to," said he, gently turning the antique weapon over, curiously, in his hand. "But how it takes one back to the old times, doesn't it? Why Nellie, tonight, out there on the hill, I felt that I was sheriff of Doña Ana again. It all came back. I could feel all the old life; I was young once more, and yes, as I rode back into town with my man in charge, I felt again that I was coming back to *you*, just as I felt always, in the old times!"

"Yes, John," she said, leaning against the edge of the counter to control her trembling, "I know. I loved you, then."

"Then you do now!" he said suddenly. "It's the answer! You will come with me!"

"Wait!" she begged. "I told you I

would tell you to-night. I can't now. Wait till the moon comes up. We will walk—up the valley—again—together."

## V

And so that following night they walked up the valley again, while the moon floated in the cloudless sky above the tops of the pines on the tallest hills. They walked silently, each facing straight ahead, until at length they had nearly reached the place where the old trail crossed the ragged-edged *arroyo*.

"Well," he demanded at length, "what is it?"

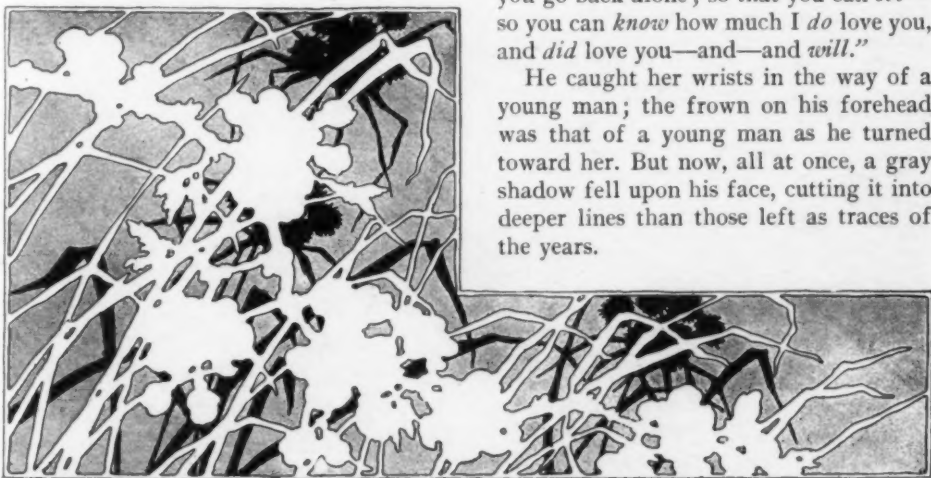
She did not answer for a moment, and something like anger flamed in him.

"You have been silent," he said half savagely. "I don't like it. What are you thinking? What are you going to say to me? You don't mean to tell me that you are going to refuse—that you don't love me—that after all you never did?"

Now she turned to him, the sweet faced lady toward the gray-haired, full bodied man who spoke. The femininity he had known in the past was in her gesture, as once more she pushed him away, both her hands against his breast.

"Don't!" she said. "Oh, you are not changed so much after all! You can still be cruel, and you can still be blind. You say I don't love you, that I did not. Very well; let it rest so. I wish I could go back and make you know that I loved you then and that I love you now, John. But—Oh! I'd so much rather just stay here and let you go back alone; so that you can *see*—so you can *know* how much I *do* love you, and *did* love you—and—and *will*."

He caught her wrists in the way of a young man; the frown on his forehead was that of a young man as he turned toward her. But now, all at once, a gray shadow fell upon his face, cutting it into deeper lines than those left as traces of the years.



"Why can't you see?" she went on, her voice breaking. "I am not *young* any longer now, John. You look the same to me; I hope I look the same to you, sometimes, when we are apart, and when we just think of what was—once. But that's not the *way* for us to do now. We've got to look at *ourselves*, and not at each other. We've got to know that the years go, and that they can't come back. John, I don't ask you to understand a woman now any more than you did then, and maybe after all we will have to part without my ever being able to explain, try the best I can, to you; but oh! I wish you would understand that when I say we can't go on together now it is because I love you; that our paths have lain apart, and must lie apart, all the rest of our lives. It won't be long now. And I am happier than I was."

"I thought you didn't love me," he said, after a long time. He still held her hands in his, and now he bent and kissed them. "I've been a fool, Nellie. I didn't understand. I never valued my claim for all it really was worth. I haven't known till now, Nellie, that it held so much fine gold. That's *you*. I suppose there is always going to be some gold in the hills that's never mined. Yes, I know a lot of things now. I know now that you did love me. Maybe I am big enough myself, now, just to say Good-by. And, yes, *I* am happier, too."

Neither spoke again. They stood where the old trail forked—one path for each at either side of the old *arroyo*. He went on into the farther path, and her feet turned back toward the town. Their hands clung, reached out, till their finger tips parted—softly. Their shadows, separate, blended with those of the encircling trees.

## VI

"Well, Ellison," asked John Henderson of his doctor a month or so later, as the two sat in the office of the former, looking out over the blue Hudson, with its crowded commerce, its ships passing, passing. "Well, old man, you're back too, aren't you?" Ellison nodded, smiling the smile with which city men meet life.

"And you found your sweetheart, back in Pennsylvania?"

"Yes."

"And she was the same?"

Ellison answered softly: "Dead. Twenty years ago. Poor, I'm afraid. I put a monument over her grave myself. I hope she didn't change, old man. I've never married, you know. And, I swear to you, it sort of came back to me, after all these years! Now about yourself? You look stronger, but somehow not the twenty years younger which I had hoped for you."

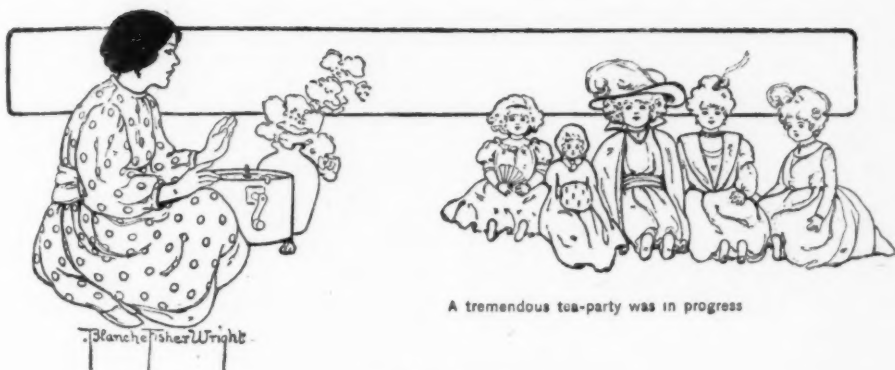
Henderson sat looking out through the window across the Hudson. "Tell me, Ellison," said he, "what do you think about Barnes, of Barnes & Lomax, for making a fellow's will? They break so many wills nowadays that you can hardly trust anybody. I want one that's air-tight."

"Cheerful this morning, aren't you?" his friend exclaimed. "But you didn't tell me about your sweetheart—never even told me if there was one left alive."

"It's rather excellent whiskey, don't you think, the club is using now?" was Henderson's reply as he snapped shut his watch case.

But, for some reason, even with this delight in prospect, neither of the two spoke a word, although they walked together all the way over to the club.





A tremendous tea-party was in progress

## Delicia

BY JOHN LUTHER LONG

Author of "Madame Butterfly," etc

ILLUSTRATED BY BLANCHE FISHER WRIGHT

### I—WHO WOULD NOT BE A WOMAN?

UP IN the top story a tremendous tea-party was in progress. There was music constantly and flowers everywhere. And, though it was only three o'clock, the guests were in evening dress. Of them, I know that *signore* Tetrassini and Doria were there as well as *signorine* Garden, Cavalieri, Pianissima and Dolcissima—these latter two being she who slept as soon as she lay down and she who said "Mama" the moment she was embraced.

As for the flowers—they were of tissue paper, but so like the real ones and so anointed with artificial odors as to have deceived the flowers themselves.

The music proceeded from a round, tin box, which, as often as it was wound, would produce:

Ever of thee  
Fondly I'm drea—

and, then, after some measures of arid buzzing,

—spirit can cheer—

then, more buzzing, and *Da Capo*—back to "Ever of thee—" again.

This aberration, almost unnecessarily, was always, and gracefully, explained by the hostess, Delicia, to be caused by the loss of pegs.

### II—WHEN ALL WAS AT ITS BEST —THEN CAME THE WORST!

When all was at its best, came heavy feet on the stairs. He who had entered first had a violin under his arm and wore a velveteen jacket with frogs instead of buttons. She who followed carried such a large wooden spoon as is used in cooking, and fanned, breathlessly, for air, with her apron.

"Good-a evenin'," said the first.

"I have brought you Cavallo," said she of the apron, in gasps.

The young musician bowed, smiling.

"I did not wish to see Cavallo," said Delicia.

"He has something to say, daughter."

"He was not invited," answered Delicia.

"Then shall I at once go!" said Cavallo, very softly—not at all angrily.

"Me? What and who am I that I should come uninvited? I go!"

Now, there was something in the voice of the young musician quite like the best tones of the G on his violin. And somehow, for absolutely no reason, Delicia ceased to be savage.

"Will it please you, *signore*, to be seat?" she said.

But, there was no seat large enough for Cavallo, and, in his immense delight at the unexpected invitation, he sat, panically, upon the foot of the small bed—much too small, for so had Delicia grown that her feet stuck through the bars at the foot. The mother sat at the head of the stairs.

"And, also, will you have some tea—*signora* mama, and *signore* Cavallo?"

And, when both had answered "yes"—one with a smile, the other very seriously—which being which you are to guess, Delicia took two cups, no larger than your thumb, from the hot stove in The House of The Dormer—very red paint proving the degree of heat—filled them from the teapot steaming on the same (you might think the steam only cotton), and beautifully served them. And, what they drank was nothing better nor worse than the rain-water which fell into the cool, deep well—*id est*, a flower pot just outside of the dormer window, with a medicine cork stopping the hole in the bottom—and causing the tea to smell, aye, and taste, too, a bit pharmaceutical. Then the mother said:

"I am afraid the beets will burn, dear. Therefore I go, beloved, leaving Cavallo with you."

"Yes, *signora* mama," said Delicia, washing the cups and the pot in the remaining medicated water of the well, and putting them away.

Cavallo was picking "Ah, I have sighed to rest me—" on the E string, in the sixteenth position.

"For, soon you will be fifteen—" the mother went on.

"The tenth of May—" said surprised Delicia, who never forgot her birthdays—though it was then only the thirteenth of June.

Then she of the wooden spoon went away and Cavallo came upon Delicia and woefully asked if he might kiss her.

"Certainly," said Delicia, "though I

know not why you ask, to-day, nor why you go upon your knee, and fear like to one who is to be shot at. Have you not always kissed me?"

"Ah, Virgin!" sighed Cavallo, "But you are woman now. So say the *madre*, and I am man. To-day I have sign contract for second violi for the orchestra in the opera house—"

"You have played there for three years," said Delicia.

"Heretofore have your father he sign the contract. He the first violin, I the second. Account he teach me. To-day I sign! I am man!"

Delicia understood nothing of these refinements of manhood and womanhood.

"If you are still waiting to kiss me, hurry. I have much to do."

She put her very beautiful mouth upward.

Cavallo kissed her. He seemed to make a great ceremony of it.

"Virgin! That is over! Get up!"

But, Cavallo, grown more courageous, not only did not get up, he detained her from her household duties.

"You marry me—soon?"

"Why?"

"You loave-a me—yes—yes?"

"Certainly. I love everybody. Father Isoleri says I must. Besides, I like to love everybody—especially—"

Delicia gathered Garden, Tetrizzini, and Doria in her arms and kissed them ravenously.

"But not as de doll!" breathed Cavallo through his teeth, jealously.

"Certainly not! What can you be thinking of! Such smooth and lovely faces and such soft hair— Take yours away!"

For, Cavallo had, injudiciously, thrust his dark head among the painted blonde-ness Delicia was embracing—where the comparisons could not but be unfavorable to him. He touched her cheek with his.

"You will scratch my skin off! And your voice smells of garlic! Go away!"

Cavallo did as he was told.

"Yet, you have not say when you will marry with-a me?"

"Oh, Cavallo, dear, go away, and let



me alone! Don't you have to practice with father for the orchestra any longer? You're awful big and clumsy—among us!" The dolls—including herself.

"What do you wish more? I mend your evening coat, so that you look as well as the men in the orchestra who get sixty dollars a week, instead of sixteen—put ink on the seam—polish your shoes with vaseline—rub chalk on the perspiration-blisters of your shirt—clean your collar with a rubber eraser—so that it can be worn twice—just as my mother does for my father. What more— And the frog on your coat is torn from the cloth!"

This latter she proceeded to sew with a pretty little housewifely air, drawing Cavallo closer, at last biting off the thread with the small teeth he had once likened to the apocryphal pearls found in the bay of Naples, forgetting the dolls, and fascinating Cavallo altogether.

"Oh, holy Virgin, 'what more!'" breathed the enamoured youth.

"That is all!" said Delicia, briefly, patting down the frog and pushing him off.

And the gentle Cavallo could but droop his head, sadly, so that only his abundant crown showed, and again pick the strings of his violin. The melody was plaintive and Delicia fell silent. Presently, Cavallo lifted his bow—quite automatically. Something within wished to be expressed. There were, first, some chords from the duet in the first act of "Madame Butterfly"—played, constantly, on two strings. But, then, there drifted from within Cavallo some tune never be-

fore heard on earth, and much better—for Cavallo and Delicia—than any Puccini has ever penned. And, it was only a pity that there was not some hand present to put it down. Cavallo thought only of making it. Presently, with an ecstasy upon her small face, Delicia slept—and the face slowly fell and hid itself among the blonde tresses of Tetrassini and Cavalieri.

And, when Cavallo stopped she did not wake. So that he could gently lift the small, dark head, eyes still closed, lips still smiling, ecstasy still upon the face.

"That I can give you—*that!*—in your face!" whispered Cavallo, putting the head back against its cushion.

Then, after long temptation, he put his lips to those which smiled—so gently that she slept on.

Then, he put the lovely little head



T. S. Wright.

"If you are still waiting to kiss me, hurry"

back among the curls of Cavaliere and Tetrizzini, knelt, as if at a shrine, confessed and failed to repent, then bowed and crossed himself, and backed slowly down the stairs.

### III—IF SHE COULD HAVE FIFTY CHILDREN—THEN!

And, then, I am sorry to say—though I suppose I had better be happy to say it—so little did the calamity of failing to marry Cavallo impress Delicia, that she forgot all about it, and, presently, went to sleep in the too-short bed, with Tetrizzini, Cavaliere, Garden, and even the humble Pianissima and Dolcissima, in ravishing *toilettes de nuit*, clasped fondly, three in the right arm and two in the left.

And there, and so, the mother, now with neither apron nor spoon, found her, in the morning.

"Beloved, last night Cavallo spoke to me, after he left you," began the mother.

This was nothing new, and meant little, and Delicia nodded as she put a great hat on the head of *signorina* Garden.

"About why people marry, why you are no longer a little girl, but a woman."

"Si, signora mama," nodded Delicia.

"You must—understand."

"Si."

And there the mother tried to make these difficult things plain. The profound ethics of womanhood and marriage.

Fortunately she said little about wifehood, and much—and sweetly, it must be admitted—about motherhood, its joys and its wonders. And, here, Delicia's interest woke acutely. For had she not been a mother to dolls for many years? It was simply adding dolls to dolls. Truly, when Delicia thought of that the tale was ilimitable. She could not have too large a family.

"Could I have a hundred children, signora mama?"

"Ahem—not quite a hundred, darling," smiled the mother.

"Fifty?"

"Well—perhaps fifty."

"I should be satisfied with even that," said Delicia, wrinkling her brows, seriously.

"I think you would," said the mother, as seriously.

"Will my children all be like the dolls?" asked Delicia.

"You will love them much more," said the mother, evasively.

"They must all *both* wink to sleep the moment I put them down, and say 'mama' the moment I press their stomachs!"

The mother could not promise this and Delicia's enthusiasm began to evaporate.

"Then, why should I be married?"

"But, child, you cannot always play with dolls."

"Why can't I?" questioned Delicia.

"You would be laughed at," smiled her mother.

"For that I do not care," said Delicia.

"It would make your husband ridiculous."

"He is so now."

"And displease him—that you think these dolls real children—"

"Mother!"

And you must understand that Delicia used this formal English appellation only upon the highest stress of emotion.

"It is true, child."

"No!"

"Yes! You *must* know the truth."

"But you told me—you told me first, mama, beloved, I remember how wonderful it was, and how true, coming from you who always told me true—yes, in all the stories—in all the playing—you always told me true—and you said that they loved me just as I loved them—and how could they if they were not real? You told me, mama, darling; you told me first—the very first! And I—I believed you."

"Yes, dear," admitted the mother huskily, "when you were a little—little child, dear!"

"But why—why—if it was not so?"

"To make you happy, dear."

"But it was a lie?"

"All mothers do that for their children."

"And can lies make children happy?"

"That one did, as you testify, dear, as you are testifying now."

"How do I know that you are telling



true now! that you ever will, hereafter?"

Delicia madly clasped three of the dolls in her arms.

"It isn't true, dollies, that you do not love me *really* as I do you. My mother told me these things, just as I told you, dear. And, I believed them—just as you do—until—my mother taught me—just as I now teach you—then I believed *her*!"

#### IV—A MOTHER TO DOLLS.

Delicia was making her *toilette*, in the frankness which had no concealments from her mother. And she, noticing where the girl had already become the woman, knew that it was time. She went on:

"—just as I now teach you, my own beloved—and as *you* must now believe"—she held the blow a moment—"that your dolls are only wax and paint and sawdust and tinsel and glass. They neither hear nor see nor feel nor understand! No more than those sticks of wood for the fire!"

Delicia, with a garment in her hand, had turned, staring, speechlessly, at her mother. Her face grew white, her child's eyes tragic.

"See! I hurt Tetrzzini! She does not even cry out. She still smiles!"

Delicia rescued the doll with fury.

But, while the young flesh was near the mother wounded it. Delicia shrieked.

"See!" said the mother. "And I did not press you as hard as I pressed Tetrzzini."



"Could I have a hundred children, signora, mama?"

"You say—you say—*signora* mama—to-day you say—for the first time—that—should I hurt Tetrzzini—as you hurt me—she will not cry out?" demanded the child.

"Yes, beloved, I do. It is necessary to teach you this hard lesson. You have never been hurt before. Think how hard it is for your mother, to hurt the beautiful young flesh. But it must be done. I have let it go too long. All the night I took to make up my mind to it. *Perdona!*"

And the tears came into the mother's eyes, and she kissed the bruise she had made.

But neither the mother's tears—nor anything—could loose the fixed idea which possessed the little girl.

"Tetrazzini," she was saying, solemnly, and with immense repression, "you heard what my mother said: that you do not hear, you do not feel; and, just as she is trying to teach me that she is right, so must I teach her through your pain, dear Tetrazzini, that she is mistaken. I am about to hurt you—cruelly, though I shall be as gentle as possible, and stop the moment you cry out. I will close my eyes. I can't bear to see your agony. Forgive me!"

She pressed upon the body, then the face of the doll. There was no sound but of breaking wood.

"What? You are smiling—smiling as I hurt you! Oh!"

In a savage frenzy Delicia dashed her small fist into the face of the doll.

"Still smiling! Oh, you monster! Then you shall bleed—bleed, do you hear! There shall be blood on both of us! Now, will you smile?"

But the doll did, indeed, still smile, despite its wound.

"Dolly!" shrieked Delicia, beside herself, dragging her nails again over the fair face.

"See, my beautiful beloved," said the mother, "she still smiles—though you have torn the flesh from the bones! Which we now see to be wood. Observe! There is no blood—as there would be if your own dear flesh were torn. Now it is certain, is it not? Enough!"

Delicia heard nothing. Flying at Pianissima, she who slept the moment she was put down, she dug deeply into the pretty, waxen face.

"And you calmly close your eyes in sleep! There is no blood—no blood—anywhere! Mother, then there is none in me!"

And, before the mother could interfere Delicia pressed her nails deeply into her own wrist.

So that the blood spurted forth and fell in long, ominous streaks upon the small white bed-garment of Delicia.

#### V—BUT STICKS OF WOOD.

Her mother bound up the wound, and, presently, they lay together upon the too-small bed, sobbing. It was done—the lesson had been taught.

"Then, *signora* mama, dear," said Delicia, "you mean to say, also, that they could not feel the burning—that it would not hurt them—no more than the sense-

less sticks of wood, there, by the hearth, waiting the fire?"

"No, dear," said the mother.

"It is *so* hard to believe!" wept Delicia.

With her little garment she wiped the tears of her mother.

"Becoming a woman has made me feel very tired, dear *signora* mama. So, I will lie in bed. If I may? Cavallo will not wish to marry me to-day?"

"No."

The mother put the pretty head back upon its pillow. Tetrazzini was still there—smiling up at Delicia with her scarred face. Pianissima, with hers scratched into fur-



Tetrazzini

"Tetrazzini, you heard what mother said"



"Becoming a woman has made me feel very tired"

rows, peacefully slept. Delicia did not take them again into her arms. She looked at them in the frank agony of the betrayed—then put them aside.

"Lay them on the shelf in the closet, mama, dear," said Delicia. "All on one pile—one above the other like sticks of wood. It will not hurt them. They will not smother, they are only wax and sawdust and tinsel and glass. They have never heard me. They have never sung or spoken to me. They have never understood me. All they have done is to smile—and sleep—and say 'mama.' Smiles made in the toy-shop—weren't they, *signora* mama, dear?"

"Yes, beloved."

"And, even the 'mama' was made there?"

"Yes."

"And the sleep—such a beautiful thing as sleep—made in a shop—with steel tools—and workmen's hands—"

"Yes."

"So that there are people in the world who create lies—yes, with hands and tools—for daily wages—as seriously as they create the most wonderful things—paintings—marble things of sculpture—great buildings—so they make lies—and, oh, make them for little children! And paint them and make them so perfect that the little children do not know them to be lies—until—oh, Holy Virgin—until like me—to-day—"

And then the human cry:

"Oh, I have loved them so much—so much—and they haven't loved me at all—not one of them—not for a moment.. I have been a little fool about them, I suppose!"

"Ah, beloved," said the mother, "we are all little fools about our toys—and they are not always dolls!"

"Please go away mama, dear, first putting them all together in a heap on the

shelf, just like sticks of unfeeling wood. Please go away and let me sleep—a long time. And, to-morrow we'll burn them—burn them all up—as you wish—as you have begged so long—as you did—as all Italian girls do—when—when—”

The two sobbed a while.

“When—they become women.”

## VI—THIS WAS BEING A WOMAN

And Delicia remained in her too-short bed all that day and until the day broke again. And, then, again, the mother sat on its side.

And, for the first time, there were deep, piteous shadows beneath the dark blue eyes of Delicia. She ate the toast her mother had brought her with the lassitude of a woman. And, when she made her *toilette* on this day, she concealed from her mother all that she had revealed the day before.

This was being a woman.

Presently, Delicia dragged herself into her communion frock, which made her seem very tall, put on her white stockings and shoes, and arranged her hair—all just as when she became the bride of the church, and, then, they were ready for the burning of the dolls.

First, they built a tremendous fire in the great fireplace, out of the wood which waited there, always ready. Then Delicia put all the dolls together, at one place, on an ignominious pile, with their beautiful garments crushed, and their hats awry on their tow heads, even with their little shopping bags in their gloved hands. Then she bravely—and, unless you have been a Delicia you will not quite know how brave she was!—took from the mica-decorated trunk of Tetrizzini, great quantities of the most splendid garments.

“This was her *trousseau*, *signora* mama, darling,” said Delicia, holding it up to her mother, still, partly, in its tissue wrappings, “—though,” she added with sad knowledge, “I do not know why she should have had a *trousseau*.”

“Perhaps,” whispered the mother, “she had kept it from the time she was married.”

“Perhaps,” nodded Delicia, listlessly.

“All brides do,” the mother went on. “I still have mine. And it is still wrapped in tissue—now no longer pink, but yellow—very yellow!”

“But *we* made this,” gently objected Delicia, “so that she could not have had it when she came here to live. See! You, yourself, made this—I remember!”

“And you made this!” sobbed the mother, swooping upon a frock drawn shapeless at places with a child's many stitches.

“Don't cry, *signora* mama, dear,” pleaded the child, with a touch. She, herself, had no tears. “For it must be.”

“Yes, it must be!”

“Mama, darling,” the child said, “we have just talked as we always did! We have said ‘when Tetrizzini came to live with us,’ and when ‘she was a bride!’”

“Yes,” confessed the mother, “it is hard to change at once.”

“But Tetrizzini was made in a toy shop!”

“Yes.”

“And *we* made her *trousseau*!”

“Yes, we.”

Meanwhile she separated Tetrizzini from the rest, and, laid beside her the wonderful *trousseau* and the jewels with which she was wont to deck herself—on such occasions as the recent party. Indeed, there were, still, a pair of great diamonds in her ears—left there because they were so hard to get in and out.

“Now, *signora* mama, dear,” Delicia said, “I am ready!”

“Yes,” said the mother.

And the fire, too, with a roar up the chimney, seemed to say it was ready.

Then, for a moment, Delicia faltered.

“Good-by, dear Tetrizzini,” she sobbed, passionately kissing the scarred face. “Forgive me for hurting you—” then she remembered—“if I *have* hurt you.”

“Shall I put her in?” asked the mother.

“No,” shook Delicia. “I think she will be less hurt by me—if she is hurt by burning,” she remembered again.

So, then, she steadily laid Tetrizzini in the flames, scorching her own small hands in the doing, and being reminded, by that, for an instant what the doll

might suffer—if she suffered at all. For, at the supreme test, Delicia was not quite convinced. She had closed her eyes so that if there should be any agony she might not see it. And she hoped that her ears would hear nothing. Well, they did not, and she opened her eyes. There, among the flames, which had already licked up the splendid outer garments, and were attacking the dainty underwear, and which had blackened all else, the false fair face of Tetrassini smiled up at her!

So that it was with less pain that she added to the fire, roaring afresh at each accession, the lovely pink stockings with the pinker clocks, and then the very crimson ones with the white roses, and the splendid lingerie and laces, which I am too polite to describe—even if I knew how—and, last, all the rings, bracelets, collars and tiaras of the purest glass and pinchbeck.

Then, they sat and waited till these were all burned up—to the last thing destructible—until the fire died and one could see only the gleam and glitter of the glass and gauds.

Delicia had, ready now, that doll named Pianissima, who closed her eyes in sleep the moment she was laid upon her back.

As before, Delicia hid her face though not her ears, and to them there came a moan—a fearfully human one! So that Delicia uncovered to look.

Ah, lovely Pianissima, among the flames, was not sleeping—as they thought she might be. The blue eyes were wide open. The lips were crinkled away from the grinning teeth. The whole face was distorted. The child, with a cry, reached



The Toast

She ate the toast with the lassitude of a woman

to the rescue. But the flames hot, now, with the pretty body of Pianissima, drove her back. And, then, in a moment, it was too late. The face became a black skeleton thing. The eyes fell from their sockets. The beautiful garments went up in puffs of gray smoke. And, presently, there was nothing left of lovely Pianissima but the jewels of glass and gewgaws of brummagem, the rag of a red stocking, the glittering, golden buckle of a tiny shoe—that was all.

The fire died again, the room was dark—save for a few long, ragged shadows the glimmer cast about.

The two sat silent, not in each other's arms—as they should have been—but at either side of the fire.

"Do you still think, *signora* mama," whispered Delicia then, "that—that they do not feel?"

"Yes, beloved."

"Then—" nodded Delicia, "I will go on—to the very end—if you are sure—quite—that they are only wood and wax and sawdust—I have the courage now!"



She seized *Dolcissima*, best beloved of them all, she who said "mama" whenever she was embraced, and flung her, almost brutally, into the blaze. Nor did she, now, even hide her face.

Then, just as the small body was disintegrating among its own finery and jewels, came a shriek:

"Mama!"

And an explosion! The fire scattered and went out.

"*Signora* mama—" came slowly—out of the darkness, in Delicia's voice, "do you still think—are you still—sure?"

"Yes!"

For, the mother, terribly holding her nerves, thanked the Virgin that it was, at last, over.

"But—*signora*—mama—that cry—"

"The machinery being loosened by the flames—"

"Machinery?"

"A small phonograph was set in motion when one pressed the stomach."

"Oh! And—the explosion—was not—vengeance?"

"The bursting of the machinery."

The forgotten music-box—perhaps reduced to greater flexibility by the softening of gummed oils—began to play, softly, and in quite proper time, deep in the ashes:

Ever of thee fondly I'm dreaming—

"Were there, then, no broken pegs, after all?" whispered Delicia.

"Certainly, *cara mia*. Only—only—"

She did not finish. For she had nothing to explain *this* mystery! The music-box played the tune to the very end, then the *Da Capo*, then, properly, stopped with a click—and was silent forever!

"Well—dear, dear, *signora* mama, it is finished—all, all finished!"

And the patient woman's voice of the little girl meant, though it, mercifully, did not say:

Whether we are mistaken or not, whether we have done well or ill, whether or not we have murdered Something, it is over. What next? What further sacrifices does unwillingly becoming a woman, demand?

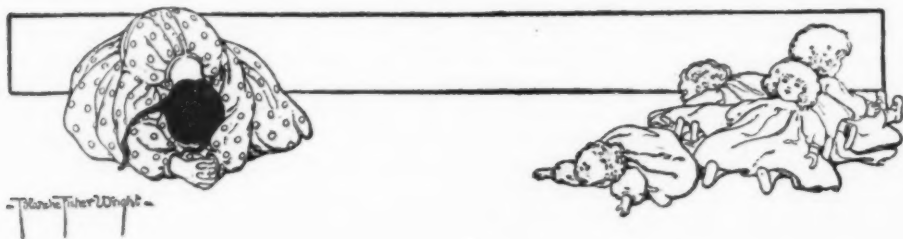
## VII—CAVALLO'S HEAVENLY MUSIC.

Delicia sat on the too-small bed and looked into the dying fire. Her mother crouched at the fireplace—her head between her knees—they who should have been close together. The last ember died and it was very dark.

Then, far below, one could hear Cavallo's violin. It was that tune beginning with suggestions of the duet at the end of the first act of "*Madame Butterfly*"—joy in sadness—played on the G and E strings. Slowly it rose—first—second—third story. And—strange!—the fire rose, too, perhaps finding some overlooked fuel to feed upon.

So that, when Cavallo, playing like an angel, at last rose to where they were, their faces began to ruddy with a new blaze.

A moment Cavallo looked about—understood—smiled. Then, still playing his heavenly tune, he went to where Delicia sat upon the too-short bed. She did not move—listen—heed. But, presently, she woke and looked about her as at some new world. For, she had come a long distance in a short while—even from childhood to womanhood. In a certain wonder, she found Cavallo at her side—smiling—playing his unearthly melody. She drooped her wonderful young head against his shoulder. He played on—until she stayed his hand and put her own into it. The mother came and bent her head upon them and said something to the Virgin. The fire burned brighter.





# The Air Serpent

*Being the Suppressed Report of Alexander Graham-Black, Aviator, Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Association of Great Britain, Submitted to that Honorable Body at its Annual Meeting, and Ordered Sealed from Public Inspection Until the Aviator Could Submit Further Proofs of His Alleged Exploits in the Upper Ether, or New Light Could be Thrown Upon the Mysterious Disappearance of His Mechanic, John Ald.—Rescued from the Association's Archives*

BY WILL A. PAGE

GENTLEMEN: The report which I now have the honor to submit to your honorable body is so extraordinary, and deals with facts so difficult to prove—beyond my own mere word and the records of my barograph which indicate the approximate height reached by my machine—that it is with much trepidation that I now appear before you. In presenting to you the results of my recent exploration of the upper ether, and the mysterious disappearance of my late mechanic, John Ald, of which cognizance has already been taken by the police, I realize that I am taxing the limit of credulity; yet before passing final judgment upon the extraordinary narrative I am about to place before you, let me call your attention to the fact that my record hitherto in the annals of aviation has been a story of unquestioned achievements, of daring which has often been characterized as reckless, and of an earnest and constant effort to discover new truths in that wonderful air world which has been opened up to exploration through the recent development of the aeroplane.

I cannot refrain, also, from reminding your learned body that pioneers in all fields of endeavor suffer martyrdom from the unthinking and the unbelieving. Half a century ago, a ribald rhymster mocked at Darius Green and his flying machine; yet within the brief space of half-a-dozen years, the perfect aeroplane expresses of to-day have been evolved before our very eyes. Even last year, when a new world's altitude record of 16,374 feet was established by the lamented Renegal, your

sub-committee on altitude adopted a resolution that the limit of attainment in the upper ether had been reached; yet less than two months after, Santuza, the daring Spanish aviator, flying his 200-horse power Mercadio tri-plane with the improved ailerons, reached the incredible height of 23,760 feet, when the ink in his barograph ran out and refused to register a greater height, although Santuza is of the belief that he climbed almost 1,000 feet higher.

To pause for a moment from the subject nearest our hearts, let me only speak for a moment of the derision and ridicule heaped upon Columbus when he planned his first voyage; of the insults and scorn directed at Galileo; or of the thousands of martyrs in the realm of science, invention and discovery who, at first denounced as fakers and preposterous humbugs, were proven after a lapse of time to have been honest, sincere and truthful in their claims.

Bearing these facts of history in mind, permit me to present herewith a brief, accurate and truthful account of all that happened during my recent ascent when, with the aid of John Ald, my invaluable and greatly mourned mechanic, I established an altitude record which I do not believe will ever be exceeded, if indeed it is reached by other aviators within our time. For not only are the difficulties such that our machines will have to be improved in some miraculous manner to go higher, but there are living, breathing obstacles to further exploration of the upper ether which will make all such experiments extremely hazardous, and

probably fatal, to even the most venturesome aviator. For I have the important announcement to make, almost beyond your powers of belief, that I have discovered that the upper ether is inhabited. This astounding discovery was made simultaneously by me and my mechanic, John Ald, for whom the voyage of exploration brought death in an unprecedented and most deplorable manner. Had not the mysterious creature of the air claimed my poor mechanic as its first earthly victim, he would now be standing here beside me upon this platform, to corroborate my unsupported testimony with his own verbal report of the most extraordinary experience that ever befell mortal man.

As your honorable body well knows, I have secured patents from time to time for improvements in the Gesler engines with which my *aéroplanes* have been fitted the past two years. By enlarging the plane surface and fitting four blades to each propeller instead of two, I have been enabled to increase the speed record to 97.16 miles per hour, this having been officially accomplished at the July Palm Beach meeting. Having established a new speed record, which I confidently think will stand for some months, I determined to try for new altitude records, but in view of the numerous unfortunate accidents resulting from experiments in the upper ether, I determined to secure safety at all hazards. I therefore reconstructed my last imported Garnier triplane so that the improved ailerons invented by Santuza could be applied not only to the main planes, but to the forward controlling and lifting planes as well. This preserved the lateral balance to such a perfect degree that it was easily possible to make a turn in eight seconds in a 25-mile wind, without banking the machine more than 30 degrees. I found, also, that by fitting the new plane with three propellers, three Gesler engines, and three gasoline tanks of ample size, I could feel reasonably certain that my power would not be exhausted without warning, for a single turn of the lever would put any or all of the three engines in operation, singly or together, and if I wished to economize on power, I could

climb with only one propeller, holding the others in reserve for possible accidents or in case I wished to combat any of the strong air currents sometimes encountered above the 12,000 foot level.

It was a clear August day, late in the afternoon, when John and a couple of hangers-on wheeled the big tri-plane out of the *hangar* at Belmont Park, the beautiful Long Island aviation ground where *aërial* history has been made in the past two years. Both John and I were determined that before another sun should rise, we would bring back as a trophy from the air a record for altitude that would never be broken. How little we knew at what a price we would succeed, or through what dangers we would pass before I returned to that dear old *hangar* where we had chummed together and experimented so much.

I was determined to go after the record at nightfall, because so far above the clouds the sun's rays prove a trifle too glaring. It was undoubtedly the tremendous light from the sun which affected the sight of poor Renegal when his machine fell from a height of 14,800 feet when he tried to exceed his own altitude record at San Francisco. Therefore I determined to do my high flying at night, when the moon was at the quarter and gave just enough light for us to see clearly and distinctly after we had passed from the lower levels.

The gasoline tanks were carefully filled, the engines tested, a supply of light provisions placed in the basket between the two seats, and the oxygen tanks carefully strapped in place on both of us, with the connecting tubes and the helmets under the arms ready to be applied when we had passed the 15,000 foot level into the upper strata where the rarefied air made the oxygen tanks a necessity.

Egerton Brooks, the official secretary of the Montauk *Aëro* Club, personally adjusted the official barograph of the American *Aëronautical* Society, and sealed it with his own seal.

"I hope you will get the record above 25,000 feet," he cried, as the mechanics began to start the engines. "It is a new Angiers barograph, adjusted to register up to 50,000 feet, though of course no

living thing could attain such an absurd height. You will notice that it is surrounded by cork, so that if you fall into the water, the record will not be injured or lost."

Giving Brooks a hearty hand-shake and a few words of farewell, I gave the signal and Ald started the middle engine, No. 2.

"You may expect me about midnight," I cried in farewell. "Keep the beacons burning until then, and if I don't return you will know I have been blown out of my course."

The great whirring of the propellers drowned further speech. I rang the forward bell, the mechanics let go, and like an eagle the tri-plane sprang aloft.

Forward, upward, over the field, over the grandstand, and ever onward and upward the giant tri-plane mounted. I had tilted the lifting forward planes to 28 degrees, and now started engine No. 1. The added power sent us upward at nearly twice the speed first employed, and in a few seconds the earth below was but a dull, dark, blurred mass, with now and then a faint twinkling from an electric light far below.

The early twilight faded into darkness when we had reached the 3,000 level and I directed Ald, who was looking after the engines behind me, to turn on the electric search-light. The warning came none too soon, for almost as I spoke there was a little fluttering, crashing sound as the machine plunged headlong into a flock of sea gulls which had not noticed our approach.

"Better look at the compass," shouted Ald. "You are out at sea."

Brushing two of the dead gulls from the plane at my side, and turning on the pocket electric light which was placed at my left over the map and compass, I soon realized that we had indeed been following a straight course across Long Island and were now probably over the Fire Island light. Shifting the vertical planes in the rear a trifle I set them at 18 degrees, which would mean that the tri-plane would describe great circles approximately ten miles in diameter, as it gradually ploughed upward through the atmosphere.

The earth was now entirely out of sight. In daylight, as all experienced aviators know, the earth becomes practically invisible at the 7,000 foot level, even on a clear day. On cloudy days one is lost to the earth after ascending a few hundred feet. Just as the waiting crowds below at an aviation meeting find it impossible to distinguish even a speck on the horizon ten minutes after a swift machine leaves the earth, so the aviator aloft on his speedy career finds himself absolutely alone in a new world.

The sensation is indescribable. One feels that one has opened up a new territory, discovered a new realm, in which he alone is king. Preserving the balance when thus out of sight of the earth is not as difficult as one might imagine, as the laws of gravitation operate through the unseen space, and one has only to watch the delicate mechanism of the anograph to ascertain whether one is losing the equilibrium of the machine.

Slowly the needle moved round and round on the barograph, steadily registering our ascent. Within the first hour, when darkness had completely shut us off from the rest of the universe, we had passed the 10,000 foot level, which for almost a year in the early days of aviation had been a prize goal for the amateur aviators before the business had been placed on the firm footing it now enjoys.

Then came the moon. It rose at 9:02 on the 75th meridian, but as we were nearly three miles above the horizon, we saw it much sooner. It seemed reflected in some faint, misty manner by the water which we knew must be far below us, but as we mounted higher and higher, even the faint reflection disappeared.

At 9:37 p. m. Ald leaned over my shoulder and grunted.

"Fifteen thousand feet," he muttered. "We can do it faster if we use the other engine."

"No," I replied. "Hold engine No. 3 for emergencies."

"Emergencies?" he repeated, with a laugh. "Good Lord, what emergencies can happen now? What? As if the tri-planes are not as safe as an express train or a sub-marine nowadays."

I did not argue with him. Ald was noted for his fondness for a controversy. I merely signaled to him to get the oxygen helmets ready, for the increased difficulty of breathing showed me that the rarefied air was fast becoming too thin for us to breathe with comfort. I noticed, too, that our speed seemed to diminish slightly, as the planes found the supporting air becoming thinner and thinner. I fondly reflected, however, that the third engine would remedy this when it became necessary to get more speed to keep aloft on the last leg of our upward climb. However, we were soon inside the oxygen helmets, and once more I could take a long, full breath of life-giving ozone.

The helmets of course made further conversation impossible, but long experience in the higher altitudes had perfected a system of signals between my mechanic and myself which enabled us to carry on a conversation fairly well.

John leaned over my shoulder at 10:38 and pointed to the needle of the barograph. It registered 22,380 feet. He nudged me.

I understood that nudge perfectly. It meant that in less than ten minutes more of climbing, we would have passed the best record of Santuza, officially 23,760 feet, and would have the world's altitude record within our grasp.

So absorbed were we in watching the barograph that we both neglected the engines, and it was only a miracle that something did not happen when engine No. 2 developed a hot bearing because of lack of oil. I sharply reprimanded John for not attending to such details, and bade him by signals to attend to his business, while I would watch the needle.

Up, around it moved. First it reached the 23,000 mark, then hundred by hundred, ten by ten, it moved on and on. I turned and gave a silent signal of joy when we passed Santuza's mark. Then I set forward determined to establish a world altitude record that would never be broken. And I succeeded.

It must have been shortly after 11 o'clock when the barograph registered 30,000 feet. This gigantic achievement, nearly six miles away from the earth,

higher than the loftiest mountain peak, higher than any balloon had ever floated, should have satisfied us. I deeply regret that we were not content to rest upon these laurels, but with a foolhardiness for which I can never forgive myself, I tried to see how much higher we could go without using the reserve supply of gasoline contained in the tank of engine No. 3—which, fortunately, we had not yet started. In fact, I venture the assertion that had it not been for the precaution of providing a third engine neither of us would have been saved from the catastrophe that followed.

Onward, upward, past the 33,000 foot level the sturdy tri-plane, steady as a ship in a calm, continued to forge. When 35,000 was reached I turned and signaled John for his advice. The poor fellow, who didn't realize how near he was to the end of all earthly things, answered to keep on going. So we went up past the 36,000 foot level.

And then we saw it.

Never to my dying day, gentlemen, will I forget the horror of that moment. Never will I be able to efface from memory the dread picture of that gigantic monster of the air, lazily floating along on the ether, scarcely moving the great, finnish wings with which a wonderful creator had endowed it. Although the cold was almost unendurable, and I had thought myself as nearly frozen as possible, I felt a sudden stiffness permeate my veins and I shook with terror. I felt John grasp my shoulder, his hand shaking as with the palsy, and though neither of us could speak because of the oxygen helmets, we both felt a grim horror which would no doubt have stricken us dumb under any circumstances.

For there, almost in front of us, a trifle to the right, coming in an opposite direction, and gazing at us with mild curiosity and perhaps astonishment, was a gigantic monster, utterly unlike anything I have ever seen before. The light from the electric searchlight cast a weird reflection upon the great creature, and this light, I believe, was one instrument which proved our salvation temporarily, for it struck the giant monster fairly in the eyes, and seemed to blind him.



The monster—or air serpent, for so I must call it—seemed to be about ninety or a hundred feet in length. Its physical structure seemed a cross between a bat and a snake. There were undulating movements as it slowly drifted, together with flapping of the twenty or thirty bat-like wings which projected from its sides. The head was enormous, and it was not the head of a bird. Two great eyes, approximately a foot in diameter each, glared and blinked over a cavernous maw which opened and closed spasmodically as the creature breathed. This much we saw, and then as the swift tri-plane shot by almost under the creature's startled eyes, I felt a sudden blast of hot air which made the tri-plane quiver and tremble for a moment. Then we had passed the creature and had sped forth into the darkness, for the moonlight was very faint.

I felt John grasp me for support. He was trembling. I turned, pointed toward engine No. 3, and at the same time deflected the forward controlling plane to an angle of 20 degrees, determined to make the quickest and yet safest descent on record. I had no desire to get a second look at the monster of the air.

The jarring of the third engine made a terrific noise, but we could not hear it. The stalwart tri-plane shook under the added pressure, and we sprang forward at a speed which I estimated at 80 miles an hour. The needle of the barograph began to settle quickly, as we dropped to the 35,000 foot level.

Suddenly I felt John's convulsive grasp upon my shoulder. I turned, and he pointed off to the left.

"It's there, sir," he cried, as plainly by his signals as though he had spoken out loud.

I looked as he indicated. There, two hundred feet away, following us almost without an effort while we were making 80 miles an hour, was the air serpent.

I shifted the vertical plane sharply to the right and veered off to escape. Almost before I had settled down to a straight course ahead, I felt again that hot, nauseous breath, which I knew came from the giant monster hovering so near us.

John was trembling all over. We were descending fast, for the barograph now registered 33,750, and our course ahead was being made at 80 miles an hour, yet that gigantic, wonderful, monstrous **THING** seemed able to keep up with us without an effort.

I determined to try strategy. Remembering how the eyes had blinked at the electric searchlight, I suddenly turned a trifle to the left, shifted the searchlight, and struck the creature with it squarely in the eyes.

The air serpent backed off instantly. I turned sharply to the right, extinguished the searchlight as I did so and lowered the forward planes to 25 degrees, a dangerous angle for a descent, as all aviators know, but I was determined to escape from the monster if possible.

But it was futile. Before the barograph showed 30,000 feet, I felt the hot breath again, and this time it came *from beneath*.

With incredible ingenuity, probably realizing from the changing air pressure that its prey was trying to escape into the lower ether, the monster had placed himself *under* the aeroplane, and I firmly believe that if I had not suddenly shifted the forward lateral planes to the horizontal, we would have struck the creature from above.

I turned to John, mutely asking advice. He was quivering with fear. And I too began to tremble anew when I realized how completely this mysterious monster of the air had us in his power.

I switched on the searchlight again and aimed it below us. There he was, the giant, undulating, fin-like creature, his sixty wings flapping noiselessly, his hulking, soft, snaky body moving forward without an effort, and the great head and the cavernous maw turned upward as if it had not yet determined what manner of bird or beast this was which had invaded the upper realms where this creature alone seemed able to exist.

I turned the plane sharply to the right, and keeping the searchlight pointing downward, shifted the forward planes again for a descent. It was our only chance and we had to take it.



But the enemy was vigilant and ever-watchful. It followed us curiously to the 25,000 foot level. Then it evidently became oppressed by the thickness of the atmosphere, and decided we had gone far enough. With a quick, sudden lashing of the fins, it dived under us, the hot breath again making the planes tremble, and loomed up straight ahead. In another moment we would have struck it had I not tilted the vertical planes sharply to the left. I turned completely around in less than three seconds, the quickest turn on record, I believe, but while the strain on the ailerons was terrific, the tri-plane held on its course.

But we could not escape the enemy. The giant monster merely gave about two jumps, and with incredible speed, repeated the maneuver. Once more I jammed the wheel sharply to the right, and once more the ailerons creaked as the strain of the sudden turn almost tore them loose.

Then came the catastrophe. The next time the monster leaped before us I flashed the searchlight into its great wicked eyes. It blinked and ducked, and in an instant we had passed over it.

I firmly believe that John Ald expected me to execute another sharp turn. Perhaps he leaned too far over in an effort to help maintain the balance. Perhaps fear and the terror took possession of his heart, and he thought the end was near anyhow. Whether he fell or jumped from his seat I know not, but when I turned my head the instant after we had passed the creature, I realized that I was alone.

I swung about instantly, and felt an ominous snap about the ailerons under the terrific strain of the turn, but fortunately all held. Then I directed the searchlight downward, and what I saw by the brilliant flashing rays I shall never forget.

There, three hundred feet below me, I saw the giant monster of the air, his great maw pointing upward. A dark object hurtled through the air, falling like a stone. It passed the startled gaze of the air serpent and fell into space below. Quicker than I can speak the words the monster darted downwards after the fall-

ing object. Sick with horror, scarcely able to work the controlling levers, I saw by the faint, flickering rays of the searchlight, down below, the monster suddenly pause in its mad dash. It had caught the falling object and swallowed it in its maw.

How I reached the lower levels I know not. My arms worked the planes automatically, the terrific descent was made in thirty minutes, and sometime about midnight I landed on the sandy beach of the south shore of Long Island near Montauk Point. Too weak to remove the oxygen helmet, which fortunately was charged for twelve hours, I lay there in a daze. About five o'clock some fishermen found me and aided in removing the helmet. The tri-plane, slightly injured by its sudden contact with the beach, was taken apart and shipped back to New York, and I personally brought the barograph, still sealed as I thought, to the rooms of the Montauk Aero Club. There a cruel disappointment awaited me, for it appears that the shock of landing broke the seal, and the record, while perfectly clear, could not be accepted as official without the official seal showing that it had not been tampered with.

I made a preliminary report on the extraordinary adventure to the newspaper reporters, and notified the police of the accident to my mechanic, but only to meet with such ridicule that I speedily decided to delay my report for careful reflection and consideration. The accepted version of the death of John Ald is that he dropped into the ocean, but gentlemen, I have made here my report, and in view of my hitherto unquestioned word, I believe I have the right to demand that it be accepted as authentic. Some day a venturesome air-man will penetrate to the upper levels, five miles from the earth, and discover new evidence to corroborate my unsupported word. And then, gentlemen, the world will realize that just as in the farthest depths of the sea, there are strange monsters we have never seen, so in the thin upper strata of air there are tenuous creatures living in a world of their own, which we have never seen.



"here never was—anything—between us"

## The Snob

BY THOMAS SAMSON MILLER

Author of "The Ship Builders," etc

ILLUSTRATED BY A. W. AMICK

THE stern-wheeler stuck to the north bank of the Niger above Igobo while across two gang-planks came and went two streams of happy, sprawling-limbed negroes and buoyant, saucy "mammies" engaged in unloading. A burly white directed them, with little interference other than an admonishing word here or a sharp word there, where some careless rascal dropped his head-load in the river through the idle play of men crowding him. The negroes quickly learned they had a master, and though they could not throttle their frolicsomeness, they played slyly, like children with an eye to "teacher." The easy flow of the work and the absence of the usual bawling and temper which characterizes the control of African semi-savages, deceived another white, who lay at full length on a hammock-chair on the upper deck. He was the very antithesis of the six feet of white manhood on the bank—a dapper, dainty

little man, with pomaded mustache and glassy monocle that contrasted oddly with his serviceable khaki and captain's shoulder straps. He took a gold-tipped cigarette from his lips and piped in dainty, drawling voice which he mistook for asperity:

"Sergeant, can't you get a hustle onto those negroes?"

The sergeant answered in the throaty burr and homely dialect of a Lancashire yeoman.

"Aye think nay to thot, zur. It is their pace."

"Then kindly trouble them into *my* pace," the officer snapped irritably, and then bawled down to a headman set over the negroes, "Hey—you headman; if you don't expedite the work, I'll reduce your rations."

The threat worked just as the experienced sergeant could have told his superior it would. The word "expedite"

not being in the headman's scanty acquaintance with English, frightened him into blustering interference—shoving a negro here, thonging another there, threatening, yelling and cursing until he had the men confused or sulking. The exquisite captain raged at them, and the undisciplined negroes laughed to see the white man in such a fury. The captain leaped from his chair to the taffrail and began hurling the tribal curse at them. Instantly every man threw down his head-load and sulkily drew off to the bank. The women, intent only on the cownie which they earned with each load, continued to work.

A broad smile marked the face of the sergeant—which however, straightened out into blankness when his captain looked that way. The latter's brawling brought a young woman from the cabin. Her voice fell on the noise like the sudden penetration of rich flute notes on the wail of violins.

"What is the trouble, Captain Moore?"

"The men are mutinous, Miss Forster," said Moore, importantly exaggerating a little sulkiness caused by his own blundering interference.

Miss Forster turned her head to the sergeant and after momentary hesitation quietly suggested—"Why not leave it to Taylor, Captain—he seems to understand them." She gave the sergeant a friendly smile.

Moore resented the implication that his sergeant was more capable than himself.

"He indulges them; they want an iron hand."

The young woman looked swiftly into the pasty little face and then quickly turned her head lest he see the smile provoked by her mental contrast of his marionette proportions and his prodigious boast of an "iron hand."

But Moore guessed and flushed; seeking a diversion, he pointed to some cases piled on the bank and sharply questioned the sergeant.

"What is in those cases, Taylor?"

"Trade-gin, zur."

"Then put it back aboard; I'll not have this expedition debauched," said the little captain, striking a pose of virtuous authority.

The sergeant warned courageously:

"Then it will be *pombe* palaver all the way of our march—we shall have trouble at every village."

Moore was new to the river and unacquainted with the usages that sanctioned the negroes' night-cap—without which they will not work, unless there is a near-by village where they can steal *pombe*, a native beer. He replied offensively:

"I am in command here, and when I want your opinion, Taylor, I will solicit it. Get the men to working." He slunk off into the cabin.

The commissioned officer and his non-commissioned subordinate were on bad terms. Captain Percy Archibald Worthington-Moore and Sergeant Rhoderick Taylor had the misfortune to come from the same Lancashire village—misfortune because the one so insisted on his dignity as an "officer and a gentleman" when the other was there to remind him by his mere presence of their common yeoman origin and schooling. If Moore had been a large-souled man it had not mattered, for Taylor was manly and unassuming; but the captain was wretchedly conscious that the sturdy boy who had been his master at school was his master yet, notwithstanding the social rating that gave him authority. Every step of this expedition had brought out the resource and courage of the sergeant and the weakness and vacillation of the captain. Unfortunately there was an eyewitness in Mary Forster, an American medical missionary taking the opportunity of this expedition—which was to install Moore as British Resident at the court of the fanatical Emir of Illorin—to reach her chosen field of work. Moore, wishing to stand well with an heiress of sufficient importance to make her début into missionary work a column story for the newspapers, had fallen into spectacular poses and an assumption of his own right as His Majesty's representative, to be her protector. But it was beginning to penetrate his noddle that the American girl had a standard of values that discounted social status. He had even seen fit grandiloquently to admonish her for her friendliness to Taylor, objecting on

grounds of discipline. She had turned her spirituelle face on his in frank surprise and in her clear-seeing way jumped to the heart of the matter:

"I take a man for what he is in himself. I like Taylor—he is gentle yet strong with the negroes; and I like him for his personality—his manhood and courage. I think it is a dreadful example of caste snobbery for us three whites, cut off from civilization, to debase one of our kind as something inferior."

Moore had treasured that up against the sergeant.

Taylor looked after the disappearing figure, choking with impotent rage and disgust. His lips let slip, "Damn the puppy!" Then he shook himself back to self-control and turning to the negroes coaxed them back into their stride, halving the men into two gangs and setting one against the other in happy, noisy rivalry; presently when Moore came from the steamer, followed by a negro carrying his sporting rifle, the sergeant lit his pipe and smoked, as if his soul were as peaceful as the brooding forest.

Miss Forster came on deck and called him.

"Mr. Taylor."

His start and the joy that leaped into his strong face revealed something more than a mere friendliness to the young woman. He took his pipe from his mouth and, tipping his helmet corrected her.

"Not *Mr.* but *Sergeant* Taylor, Miss Forster. *Mr.* implies a commission."

"Well, Sergeant, I only called to know if you would take a cup of tea with me; all Englishmen like an afternoon cup of tea, don't they?"

His healthy tan flushed a deep red and he stepped across the gang-plank to the upper deck, his face keeping its flush, after the manner of men shy with women.

She had tea and crackers set out in the fore cabin. The sergeant pulled up in the doorway.

"Come in," she cried; then as he did not move she looked up to repeat the invitation, but suddenly divined the cause of his hesitation. "Oh," she said, "I see; I must not invite you over the chalked line. Then the boy shall bring the things aft."

So the thick iron-stone china was set out on a Madeira table over the stern-paddles. There she poured tea, then leaned her finely chiseled face in her beautiful hands and with her elbows propped on the table, looked straight into his grey eyes, coaxing away his shyness. She had not been unobservant of his restraint and patience under the slurs put on him by his superior; indignation had given place to sympathy, and that to a deeper interest which she dared not own to herself.

"What did you mean just now by '*pombe* palaver?' " she asked.

His red deepened and he squirmed uncomfortably.

"It's naught tae trouble a lady," he said.

She understood his wish to spare her the brutalities of Africa, that gave a cloak of churlishness to his reply.

"Now, Sergeant, be perfectly frank with me. I want to know what is ahead of us. Besides, I'm not a stranger to ruffianism—I slumped once in the Bowery Missions. What is *pombe* palaver?"

He answered reluctantly, impelled to do so by her determination.

"These Fantee porters are just animals—just that, animals." He spread his hands helplessly, his heart too gentle to shock her with brutal details of their animalism.

"Yes, yes," she urged impatiently. "Go on; I've told you I have slumped in the Bowery; and these men can't be worse. It is because they need me that God has sent me to them."

Her simple faith and unobtrusive courage seemed to lift her out of the realm of brutalities; he felt that whatever he might say, he could not shock a soul above physicalities.

"We coax the negroes with a night-cap of trade gin; if they canna get it they will raid the nearest village for *pombe* and make big palaver—will make bad blood between us and the natives all along the line of our march. The captain frets them—he does na onderstan' 'em."

Her eyes were on his thick, strong wrists, and she mused—"You have wonderful control over them—I have watched you with them."



He flushed with pleasure, but answered in deprecation—"If you're not afeard o' 'em, they're afeard o' you. A nigger is like a bull-terrier I had; if I dinna boss heem, he wad 'a' bossed me."

"Ah!" she exclaimed, looking at the shaggy bullet head before her, and the full throat and heavy shoulders. "How," she asked, "did the government ever come to select Captain Moore for such a dangerous post as Resident to Il-lorin?" Mentally she was contrasting the two men.

He answered indirectly—"I canna think he will hold the Emir."

"You mean?"

"A picked quarrel and a poisoned dinner—or a knife in the back."

"How dreadful!"

"It's a' in the game o' colonizin'," he replied stolidly.

"You are unsympathetic."

He disputed her charge.

"I look things squarely in the face. Captain Moore wanted the job and got it. If they had offered it tae me—"

He threw up his head, his eyes flashing his ambitions.

"Well?" she asked irritably, "why don't you try for such a post?"

"I am a sergeant," he answered simply.

She divined intuitively his throttled ambitions, his unwilling surrender and his pain. She put out her hand impulsively, but quickly withdrew lest she hurt his pride. Instead she voiced a question that puzzled her.

"It seems strange to me that a man like you—so strong and capable—should sneak out of the struggle of life into the dead routine of army discipline. If I were you, I would want to be free and fighting for my place in the world. Captain Moore

tells me your people were his people's tenant farmers. Surely farming is better than soldiering?"

"What!" He exploded in laughter that was like subterranean rumblings, but quickly recovered and apologized.

"Pardon me, Miss Forster—but—oh, weel, Captain Moore is sometimes amusing."

"Do you mean to say—that Captain Moore—lied?"

"Not deeleeberately, Miss Forster; 'it's a thing tha's been drilled intae heem. You have tae know his mither tae know how leetle he ees personally responsible. Aie know her—oor twa farms lay in the same Lancashire hamlet. Mrs. Moore dreamed she was a great lady—she dreamed it sae often she got tae believing it hersel'. She colored her world tae suit her fancies, givin' tae her son a sea-serpent name wi' a double endin', and transposin' farmer Moore intae squire Moore. The chore boy became *understableman*, an' she

dressed Percy—I should say Captain Moore, but the old name slipped oot—in slashed velvet with lace frillin's an' cautioned heem ag'in playin' wi' t' 'village children.' O' course wi' such a trainin' he developed intae a snob—always wanted tae be general in oor play wars. Sin' he had a real shop sword an' tin helmet, weither boys gave in tae his gran' toggery—afterwards, when old Mither Jones sued for her account, the judge turned her down, sayin' toys were luxuries an' not proper goods for credit, therefore not recoverable by process of law. In those days Percival was a lot tae oor house—we had a roast most every



"Get a hustle onto those negroes!"



## II

day, an' mither's pastry hand was famous, whereas ower tae *squire* Moore's the Sunday joint reached intae the middle o' the week wi' eggs finishin' out the tail end. But Percy did well at school—was boun' tae wi' that string o' names tae spur heem on. He won a grammar-school scholarship an' in turn snatched a second from the military school.

"Things went vera deefereent wi' me; first I wasna studious; an' next I had tae wark on the farm, for there were seven lassies in oor house. Oor appetites outgrew the farm's revenue an' the older boys had to hike. There was nae sae mony roads that one was worried as to choice; mysel', I chose the Dragoons—I laike horses, an' I've just got tae be oot under the skies. There was a call for non-coms to drill niggers in West Africa, wi' double pay an' a chance o' promotion to a commission. Unfortunately I came under my old schoolmate—every once in a while we see each other in the old perspectives. It ees vera unlikely he will recommend me for a commission, an' wi'oot hees recommend, I have na smallest chance."

At that moment Moore's voice was heard piping at the negroes and the sergeant rose hurriedly, thanking Miss Forster for her tea and kindness.

She woke out of a reverie with a sudden realization that she had been basking in his homely burr and unpolished English. Then her eyes fell on Moore coming over the gang-plank, his tongue upbraiding as his eyes fell on the tea cups and took in the situation.

"Taylor," he bawled, "do you wait until my back is turned to skulk?" Nothing but intense jealousy could have made him so far forget his position as to brawl in this way.

Taylor replied in even tones like a great Dane to the yelping of a toy terrier—"The unloading is finished, zur."

"Then form column for the march. See that trade gin aboard. Have relays of bearers for Miss Forster's and my hammocks."

Bitter schooling had taught the sergeant self-control; he saluted and went off to execute the orders, his face a set calm.

"Aye, sing, ye black devils; but I misdoot ye we'll a' be singing a deefereent tune when we reach yon village an' ye crave yer stimulants. Maybe the cap'n'll let ye smell oot o' his own bottle."

The sergeant apostrophised the men lagging single-file in a long column across a blackened plain toward a village that topped a slight rise like a cluster of farmyard hayricks. Little puffs of charcoal dust rose under foot where the natives had burned over the high grass in preparation for yam planting. The fine dust coated the khaki of the Housa soldiers who headed the column, and caked to the sweating pores of the carriers, while the noise of the negroes clearing their nostrils and throats was curiously like the snorting of thirst-maddened cattle at the scent of water. In the center of the line swung two hammocks from poles borne upon big black shoulders and protected from the dust by fine mosquito netting. Taylor marched with the men, protecting his lungs by winding his puggaree about his mouth and nose. He was black from the crown of his helmet to his field shoes. All the anxiety and strain of the march were his—from van to rear he hurried, coaxing, threatening and occasionally bringing his hippon down on bare shoulders where obstinacy demanded it. The whole line gutturally chanted a refrain.

Up at the village their coming made a stir; figures darted about the huts like bees buzzing about their hives—like the fierce African bees that when angered can sting a man to his death. Then a horde of pirouetting savages poured forth with extravagant display of assagais. Taylor directed the column towards a wide-spreading alleluba tree, then reported to the foremost hammock.

"The natives are turning out, zur."

An aroma of scented tobacco emanated from the mosquito curtains and a voice drawled languidly:

"Aw, do the ceremonies, Taylor. I'm not going to accommodate the chief with any disgusting ritual of blood-brotherhood. If he is making us presents, ask for milk and fresh fruits."

"Yes, zur."

Taylor stepped to a Housa soldier and handed him his sword and revolver; thus unarmed he struck from the column to meet a young dandy chief in a wonderful coiffure, his body shea-greased and painted in red-ochre, who stepped out from the pirouetting savages to meet him. The column continued on towards the alleluba tree. There Taylor shortly followed it and reported the "palaver" to Moore.

"The chief is friendly, zur. He is sending goats' milk, wild honey and men to fill our waterskins. He says he has no fruits, that the monkeys raided their plantain groves. But he will send *pombe*."

"Do not accept the *pombe*."

The sergeant hesitated a moment, looking at Miss Forster who stood a little way off, conscious that if he advocated accepting the beer he would be putting himself in a false light with the missionary, a thing he by no means liked. Yet the need of a warning to the ignorant captain forced him to speak.

"If you refuse anything he sends, zur, it means an insult; also the porters will be angered by the refusal."

Moore stared at his sergeant's audacity, then stormed.

"Do you stand there teaching me my duty? Attend to my orders. Set the guards. No man is to leave camp. I hold you responsible."

Taylor flushed, clenching his fists in quick anger, then as suddenly controlling himself. He saluted and went off to set the camp. While doing this, men came from the village with gourds of goats' milk, calabashes of honey and *pombe*, their anxiety to stand well with the owners of so many guns being pitifully evident. Taylor accepted the former, but refused the *pombe*. The villagers drew away at once, sullen and threatening; but their mutterings were not so loud as the mutterings of the tired and dry-tongued bearers who had expected the *pombe* by custom and right. Taylor looked sharply around him to catch and make an example of the grumblers; but when he looked one way the growlings were behind; the other way and the same

thing happened. He came up behind the large tent that served both Miss Forster and Moore for a common dining room. He heard her voice, pitched high in expostulation.

"You are always hectoring him. I think it is mean to goad a man whose position forbids his just resentment."

Moore answered sulkily, "Taylor would debauch the expedition if I did not keep a firm hold on him. Also he is working against me. He is churlish and unreliable."

"Oh! How can you say that after he has worked so hard?"

Taylor had unconsciously halted, but he now recalled his eavesdropping and hurried away to his own tent, where he threw himself on his tarpaulin in all his grime. Crouching Turk fashion, he took his head in his hands and stared unseeing into the quick-falling shadows of night. His heart burned like fire. At times his body shook, and his teeth chewed, chewed, chewed on nothing. His lips moved and words came with low, tense force. "As sure as God, I will one day kill him." He started at his own voice, and with a sudden realization of the madness that was taking possession of him. If he were free—if he could at that very moment throw off the army yoke and go up to this cad and fling the lie in his face—force apology on bended knee. His hands seized his tarpaulin and tore it as if it had been paper. He reached out his open hands into the night and clawed the air, as if he were clawing Moore's little throat.

A cry—a series of cries—rang out over the plain. He leaped to his feet and rushed out. Darkness had fallen as if a pot of ink had been turned over the world. How long had he given himself over to his rage? He looked around the camp, his experienced eye at once noting the absence of many forms that should be lying there. Suddenly Moore stood at his elbow.

"What has happened?"

"The men have broken camp and raided the village for *pombe*. It is *pombe* palaver." There was no "I-told-you-so" in his voice; only a matter-of-fact statement.



The sergeant apostrophised the men lagging single-file in a long column

"Then the carriers have deliberately disobeyed?"

"The soldiers too, I fear me, zur."

"Then why do you stand there doing nothing? Good God! listen to them. Take a patrol and bring them in. *Listen* to them! Good God!"

Taylor called the guards and took them on the charge, muttering, "Aye, 'Good God' and 'Good God' and 'Good God'—you puppy. But listen to the devils. The devils!"

Down the plain floated gasps and shrieks mingled with shouts of defiance, war-cries and drawn out "a-ahs" of pain. The guards ran with bent backs and fixed bayonets until they came to the fighters. They fought hand-to-hand, the men of the camp with machetes and some few sidearms of the Housa soldiers, while the villagers fought viciously with poisoned assagais and darts. Each side intimidated the other with fierce, animal-like growls. The original cause of the trouble, five large jars of *pombe*, lay overturned on the plain. Taylor threw himself and

his men between the combatants, who were now fighting merely in the lust of blood. He snatched a rifle from a guard and swinging it as a club drove the fighters apart, until the men of the camp suddenly turned tail and fled.

Taylor marched back thoughtful and worried. The audacity of the raid revealed open mutiny that would never have dared raise its ugly head if the canny negroes had not observed the enmity between their white officers. The sergeant was too well versed in African tragedies not to recognize the beginning of a tragic sequel like that of many African expeditions—a sob out in the wilderness and then a silence. A visualization of Miss. Forster came to him, sobering him to the first pangs of fear his life had experienced.

But he was back in camp. Moore strutted up and spoke in low tones, that Mary Forster, standing over against her tent, might not hear.

"How came so many men to break

camp without your knowledge, Taylor? When did you last go the rounds?"

Taylor had to admit that he had not been the rounds since posting sentries, and to Moore's sharp, "Why?" answered lamely, "I forgot, zur."

"You forgot! Good God! I've a mind to put you under guard."

The darkness covered Taylor's ashen face—which the next moment crimsoned so that the neck veins stood out like scarlet rivers under the pressure of the blood that rushed to his face before the threat of putting him under colored guard. It was good for Moore that he did not attempt to carry out his threat.

Maddened by the sergeant's silence—which he mistook for contempt—Moore raged in his thin tenor.

"You are abetting the men—you want to see this expedition ruined and me discredited."

"If you were not my officer, zur, you would na dare make that charge. God knows I want to see this mission through wi'oot further mischief. I tell you, zur, you've got the men all awry. They mistrust you—in a crisis they wont follow."

"Mistrust me, eh. And why, pray?" sneered Moore; and then in a second he repented the question that laid him open to the sergeant's retort:

"They mistrust your courage, zur."

A dreadful pause ensued. Then Moore exploded:

"Damn you! Damn you! You shall pay for that—damn you!"

Taylor responded with a civil reproof, spoken with galling calm.

"You exceed the license of your authority in swearing at me, zur; I refer you to the regulations."

"I do, eh! Take care, Taylor—take care! You have not yet tasted the license of my authority. By gad, I am Resident, and am licensed to give you a lesson that will teach you your place for the rest of your life. I am your master!" He shook his fist in the other's face.

Mary Forster's voice reached them, for Moore, in his excitement, had forgotten her.

"Captain Moore, some of the men are dreadfully cut up; can't we do something for them?"

She went up to the two men while speaking, followed by a boy with a Dietz lantern, the light of which fell on Taylor, showing his right arm to be blood-stained. She spoke peremptorily:

"Come to my tent, Sergeant, and have that wound cauterized—it may be poisoned. Don't argue; I am medical officer here. Come!"

She led the way to her tent, pointing him to a stool there.

"Sit down; hold out your arm."

She talked as she dressed the cut with deft trained movements and a gentle womanliness that went straight to the sergeant's big heart.

"It just missed an artery. If it hadn't missed—what then had become of this expedition? What *will* become of it if you and Captain Moore quarrel? Oh, Mr. Taylor, bear with him—you must bear with him for all our sakes—for the sake of the negroes you have brought into a foreign and hostile country—for my sake, if you will."

Their faces were close together; his disclosed by the wan light of the lantern in all its grime and strength; hers clean, sweet and inviting.

The plea for "her sake" was like a match to his smouldering emotion. His big hands closed on hers. "Aye, Miss Forster, for your sake I'll take all that's comin'—for your sake, lass!" He unconsciously fell into his homely dialect. "But one day there'll be a reckoning 'twixt him an' me."

"You must not hold hatred in your heart," she reproved. "It is weak, and I cannot think of you and weakness in common. These trials are given us to develop character, worth, resistance—but here am I preaching to you, and you so big and brave and experienced."

"Preach on, lass," he smilingly invited. But the worship in his eyes frightened her. She assumed a severe tone.

"You must go straight to your bed. You have not rested all night; you wont be ready for the march at reveillé."

At daybreak a score more men went to the village to fill the water-skins, while the rest of the camp paraded to receive Captain Moore's gasconading reprimand





Taylor caught her up in his arms and plunged for the open plain



—which was suddenly interrupted by loud cries from the water party. The villagers had issued from their huts in war paint and were assaulting the men, driving them back into camp with insulting epithets. One savage flung a taunt direct at Moore.

"Go your way, white man; we wont palaver with you. You are bad; you are robbers."

Moore flew into a silly rage, and turning to Taylor, ordered instant march on the village wells, under loaded arms.

Taylor was aghast. He parted his lips to protest, but saw that it would only provoke Moore to a more stubborn opposition. Saluting, he therefore swung off to form the men. As he passed Mary Forster's tent she saw his troubled face.

"Is anything wrong?" she asked.

"Everything," he jerked out harshly. "We march in arms to the wells. We have nae moral right—it'll kick up a dust from here to Illorin! The war-drums will warn ahead of us that we are bad. It is war—native war—poisoned wells, cut-off stragglers, ambushes, hunger, poisoned arrows from tree and grass. He does nae know wha' he's doin'—he's playin' war as we played it with tin swords an' helmets in the school grounds."

"What should we do?" she asked with absolute confidence in his solution.

"One of us should go in unarmed and make palaver—offer explanations and publicly punish the night's offenders. We ha' got tae humor that dandy chief. At the best it's a touch-and-go mission—but if the captain wad let me—oh, but he wont."

"Why?"

"I loom too big a'ready for a non-com."

"Oh, surely he will put jealousy aside in the face of this."

As if in answer to her half-hearted assertion, Moore's tiny voice floated down to them as he raged at his servant over a trifling matter of dress. She received a realizing shock of the unfitness of their commander for his position and of their common danger. She laid her finger tips on Taylor's thick forearm.

"If—if there is big trouble, you ought

to do as you think best—I mean independent of your officer. If there is an inquiry afterwards, I would be a witness. Do you think I could do any good if I spoke to him?"

"He'd think you came from me—he'd recognize my argument. But you can try."

She went off at once, while the sergeant set about striking camp, with an eye to the young woman's approach of Moore and a jealousy of the hand she laid on the captain's arm. He saw Moore brush it off with a gesture of petulance, and when she presently came back to him, he saw failure in her face.

"I cannot move him. And there goes the 'advance' bugle."

He edged protectingly toward her, whispering hoarsely, "Keep close, lassie—for God's sake, keep close tae me."

She marched in his giant shadow.

As they approached the huts, they were struck by the pregnant stillness and the absence of those pastoral features which generally mark African villages—hens, goats, tumbling pickaninnies and gossiping women. Suddenly they came on the village market-place and an assemblage of the young men, squatting silently around the dandy chief and the tribal wizards. They were unarmed, but their sullen faces revealed an aggressive temper held in check by the fear of the whites' guns. The young chief insolently received them sitting.

Moore blustered by means of an interpreter—"It is bushman's manners to sit before a guest."

The answer came unhesitatingly: "It is bushman's manners to come with guns. I treated you kindly; I sent you milk and honey and goat's flesh, the best I had. But you refused my *pombe*—which is bushman's manners. As a brother I dealt with you. But your men came in the night and stole. You are thieves. You come with closed fists (armed). Go on your way. You are bad."

Taylor whispered to Moore.

"They've hidden the women and children."

"Well,"—irritably—"we came for water, not women."

"I mean, zur, that they hide the women and children when there's going to be trouble. It is their custom."

"Allow me to know a little of their customs," snapped Moore.

The chief had risen to address his last insult.

"You come to my house like robbers. Then take what you will; I will not stay to see you steal. I go, and my men go with me. In a while you will have too much." He made a motion with his right hand and his men all rose and silently marched out of the village.

Moore stood there for the moment, spellbound with the surprise of it, frowning over the chief's enigmatical speech. Then all around the village there arose a sound as of falling calabashes. Presently a bee came sailing over the thatched roofs; then twos—threes—dozens—swarms—until they made a black cloud against the tranquil sky. The porters and soldiers started screaming.

"The bees! O-o-h, the bees! They done turn ober the bees. We done all go die one-time."

They dived pell-mell for the cover of the huts; but the doors were held against them on the inside. Panic—wild, shrieking panic—seized them; they ran down the hut lanes, here, there, everywhere, throwing their beggarly loin-cloths about their faces, their naked bodies quivering under the lash of those dreadful stings.

Mary Forster gave a sudden cry of pain and swept a winged fury from her cheek. Taylor turned to her, and was moved to instant action by the sight of a score of angry little beasts burrowing down into her wavy hair. He tore off his puggarree, wrapped it about her face, caught her up in his arms like a child, threw her in fireman fashion over his left shoulder, brought his left hand round the hem of her skirt, and with his right hand shielding his eyes, plunged for the open plain. A choked cry from Moore was borne to his ears, but he stayed not to investigate, possessed as he was by the sole idea of getting Miss Forster away from the infuriated bees. With him ran half a dozen soldiers, like little brown rabbits. Over the charcoal plain they ran, the insects pursuing vi-

ciously until they reached the alleluba tree. He laid his burden on the ground, quickly loosened her hair and shook out its furies.

Presently she gasped a single word:

"Moore?"

He looked over to the huts. "In the village!"

"You will go for him?" she said.

"Yes," he answered, moved by the simple idea of duty, and set off at once.

He found Moore face down in the earth, where in his panic he had tried to burrow his head ostrich-like into the sands. The sergeant gently turned him over, and seeing the face black from choking, opened the mouth and drew out the tongue. It was swollen by stings until it had closed the throat and stifled the heart-beats forever.

### III

They were camped about the walls, trying to open up negotiations with the lurking natives while the sergeant awaited the return of the runner he had sent back to Lokoja with a report of the tragedy and request for instructions. Taylor was looking through the packs for something suitable to send out to the dandy chief as an opening to negotiations.

"I wish," he said to Mary Forster, "I had some of that pomatum they love so."

She had a suggestion. "Ogalla this morning was going to fry the breakfast bacon in a pot of grease which I discovered in time to be his—" Her voice broke and she pointed over the plain to a mound with a simple wooden cross at its head—"his mustache pomade."

Taylor straightened his back and turning, saw her eyes wet with pity. For a second it seemed that he would catch her in his arms, but disinclination to take advantage of her helplessness stopped him.

"You feel sorry for heem, Miss Forster, but it was nae sae bad a thing tae happen—his mither will never lose her heroic ideal, which she wad ha' done. I am more troubled over these poor niggers and what Moore's successor may do to 'em when he comes in wi' big notions of punishin' treachery an' a' thot."

But she was still looking out at the mound, the tears flowing silently down her cheeks. The sight was more than his love could withstand. He sprang to her.

"Dinna greet, lass—Mary, girl—" He dropped on his knees beside her, gathering her unresisting body into his arms. "Lass, d'y'e un'erstan', Aye am naeboddy—just a sergeant. Do your gran' frien's ride in motor cars wi' sergeants, or go tae opera, or sit tae table wi' 'em? Do ye un'erstan' ye can no be my frien' an' the frien' o' his kind?" He jerked his thumb in the direction of the mound.

A shadow fell over them, checking the answer on her tongue. Looking up, they saw a runner taking a spill from his nostrils. Taylor snatched the paper and read

his fate, gulping to Mary Forster—"From the High Commissioner." As he perused the few lines his face fell into utter bewilderment, quickly chased away by radiant joy. He dropped the paper and caught the young woman's two hands in unrestrained gladness.

"Aye'm commissioned Captain an' Resident to Illorin. The High Commissioner writes that he has had his eye on me a long time. Do ye un'erstan' wh' Aye'm sayin', lass—Aye'm commissioned—there's nayething atween us now."

She struggled weakly in his smothering embrace, gasping, "There never was—anything between us, only—oh, you big blind stupid! Let me go; there's a negro looking."

## The Clodhopper

BY JOHNSTON McCULLLEY

Author of "The Song of the Sand," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT EDWARDS

### I

THE Governor made a gesture of despair and looked across the desk at Burton. Then, seeing that Burton did not care to stare him in the eyes, the executive shifted his gaze until it rested on the motto frescoed on the wall: "Government by the people and in the interests of the people."

"You see," said the Governor, "that it is not in my power to do anything. You see what we're up against! Somebody has leaked, of course, and then this member from the country, who imagines he was sent to the legislature to right the wrongs of the people, has come forward with this confounded resolution."

"Just what is the resolution?" asked Burton.

"In substance it is just what I told you. He asks that a commission be named to investigate conditions at the state institutions, particularly the orphans' home and the asylums and the reformatories."

"That hadn't ought to bother us. Don't you get to name the commission?"

"I do not. The resolution specifies that the members of the commission shall be men who are not members of the legislature, and that they shall be selected one by the Senate, one by the House, and one each by three certain civic societies. I can't boss the civic societies because I've been turning them down regularly. The majority of the commission will be against us."

"But the resolution—"

"The resolution was referred to a committee."

"How about the committee?"

The Governor smiled. "The committee," he said, "happens to be of three members, of whom we control just one. The speaker of the House handed us that little package—he's on the other side of the fence, you know. We've got to control two men on that committee in order to do anything. Taylor is our man; Hanley is another member, and we can't touch him

because he wants to get square with us."

"The third one?"

"The third is Richards, another clodhopper."

"What about him?"

"It is up to you, Burton. I can give you some information about him. He was elected from a city district, but he lives in a little suburban town named Centerville. He's as poor as a starving rat. He's in love and wants to get married. He owns a little place, but there's a mortgage on it."

"He'll be easy," commented Burton.

"Let us hope so," said the Governor.

"If he isn't, and he signs a favorable report on that resolution, nothing in the world can stop its adoption. You know as well as I that the legislature has it in for me, because you and two or three others are getting all the pie. It would be a lovely chance for them to get square with us. And if the resolution is adopted, and the commission is named, and the investigation is made—"

The Governor stopped speaking and made a suggestive gesture; Burton shrugged his shoulders.

"If that happens," said the latter, "your political career is gone to pot, and we face prosecution—all of us—and our lovely graft on public institutions and their supplies comes to an end."

"You see, I can do nothing," said the Governor. "For once, things are beyond me. We didn't have an inkling of that resolution, or we might have made arrangements before it was offered. But now it is up to the committee, and the rest is up to you. We've got Taylor, of course; we can't get Hanley; so we must get Richards."

Burton thought of the clodhopper, in love, with a mortgage on his home.

"Easy!" he said. "I'll tend to it!"

"At once?" asked the executive.

"Monday morning," said Burton. "Mr. Clodhopper is out at his suburban home now, of course, spending Sunday with his girl. I'll nail him to-morrow morning."

"Let me know how you come out," said the Governor.

Burton left the executive mansion and hurried downtown.

And at that hour the Clodhopper was walking down the narrow street of the little suburban town, with Miss Irma Dayton holding to his arm.

"It'll not be long, dear," he was saying. "We can be married at the end of the session, and we'll save enough money some way to pay off the mortgage. We'll not go to the city to live, though I'd have a better chance there. We'll just stay here, where everyone is our friend, and where the people love and trust us. Some things are better than wealth."

## II

When in the city, Richards put up at a certain cheap hotel, and there Burton found him at an early hour next morning.

"I want to speak to you regarding some legislative matters," Burton said. "Shall we go to your room?"

Richards led the way, waved Burton to a chair, and tendered a cheap cigar. Although Burton was accustomed to excellent cigars and hated a cheap one, he was a diplomat, and he puffed at Richards' weed with every evidence of pleasure.

"This resolution regarding the appointment of a commission to investigate conditions at the public institutions has come to my notice," Burton said. "I understand it has been referred to a committee of which you are a member."

"That is true," said Richards.

"Now, of course, you know I am a friend of the Governor's — everyone knows it—and I don't pretend to be a saint. But the Governor wants to stay in the political game—hopes to wear the senatorial toga. And so his administration must look in pretty good shape at its end. I had a talk with the Governor yesterday. We decided that the state is spending too much money foolishly. This commission, if it is appointed, will cost the state several thousand dollars."

"Easily," admitted Richards.

"The Governor doesn't want that foolish expenditure tacked onto his administration. Of course, if the resolution is adopted, he will have to countenance it, for it will look bad if he doesn't. But it





"You see," said the Governor, "that it is not in my power to do anything"

is all rot! It's a graft of someone who wants to be appointed on the commission. The state institutions are all right. Why investigate them? Why spend good money—the people's money—in such a foolish way? After the investigation has come to nothing, the public will point to the commission and say there is where the Governor wasted a few thousands of the public funds. Don't you see?"

"Yes," said Richards, calmly, "I see. The thing I see is that the Governor and his friends want to stop the investigation."

"Sure we do! And I've told you the reason!"

"Is that the only reason?"

"That, and the fact that the Governor doesn't like to have such a reflection on his administration. It's a reflection, understand, even if the commission does report everything all right. It'll be a great waste of money. Who will gain by such an investigation?"

"Who will gain?" cried Richards, springing from his chair and walking back and forth before Burton. "I can tell you who will gain! The little tots in the

orphans' home, who eat food that isn't fit for dogs, who shiver at night because they haven't enough bed clothing, who go uninstructed because there are not as many teachers as there should be, who are treated like animals instead of poor, unfortunate human beings!"

"Rot!"

"Who will gain? The poor wretches in the insane asylum who are poorly clothed, poorly fed, and who don't have exercise enough to keep them in health because there aren't keepers enough to watch over them when they are taken from their wards! The young men and women at the reform schools, sent there to be reformed, and who are growing up hardened criminals because they haven't proper instruction, who curse the state that imprisons them but neglects to feed them decently and neglects to give them fit quarters in which to live—they are the ones who will gain!"

"Rot, I say!"

"Is it rot? I've made a small investigation on my own account. I've seen wards reeking with filth because there were not enough janitors to keep them clean. I've



seen human beings fed like dogs because there were not enough employes to give attention to all. I've seen and tasted the stuff that passes for food. When this investigation is made the state will reek from one end to the other with the scandal! Then I'll pity you, and the Governor—"

"What have we got to do with it?" demanded Burton.

"What have you to do with it? You and the Governor, and the ring you operate—you've everything to do with it. You pad payrolls and put salaries in your pockets that should go to pay for adequate help in these institutions. You see that the state pays for decent food, you purchase garbage, and you feed the garbage to the inmates and put the difference into your pockets. The state orders and pays for twenty thousand blankets; and there are five thousand delivered, and the money for the other fifteen thousand goes into your pockets. That's what you have to do with it!"

Burton smiled up at the man before him—a crafty, knowing smile.

"My friend," he said, "I've seen men like you before. I've seen them elected to the legislature, as you were, when they knew nothing of politics. I've watched them while they got their eyes opened. Then they'd rave, as you are raving, and talk about changing the whole scheme of government, of attacking a Governor and a state machine and making the state reek with a scandal—just as you are talking of doing. I've watched them reach the crisis—where you are at this very minute. And then they each had a chance at one of two paths—and one leads to the place where the agitator is discredited and broken financially and politically and kicked out, a wreck; and the other leads to the place where the agitator has common sense enough to float with the tide instead of bucking against it, and becomes prosperous."

"Well?" said Richards.

Burton's smile fled, and he bent forward, while his brows lowered and he spoke sternly.

"It's up to you—right now!" he said.

"What do you mean? Speak out!"

"I intend to speak out! You report fa-

vorably on that resolution and we'll break you—we'll ruin your career and your business, discredit you with the people, make a laughing-stock of you, kill you off in every way. You'll not be able to hold up your head!"

"And if I report unfavorably?" asked Richards.

"Then we'll take you under our wing. And when I say that, I mean it! The Governor never deserted a friend, did he? Well, he'll not desert you, once you are in the fold. Understand?"

"I understand you are trying to bribe me."

"That's a dirty word, and it doesn't help you any to speak it. You are young, with your whole life before you. You are in love and want to marry. You have a mortgage on the little place you own. Your legal business scarcely gives you a living."

"How do you know these things?" demanded Richards.

"Perhaps I made it my business to know. It is the truth, isn't it? All this stuff I've been telling you?"

"And, if it is—?"

"Suppose that mortgage was paid off, suppose you were placed in a position to marry, that you were given the chance to live in the city on fat legal fees that would come to you because the Governor was your friend, and suppose—that you were sent to Congress."

"In order to get these concessions, I sell my honor, allow myself to be bribed?"

"In order to get these things you report unfavorably on that resolution—that's all. You can't lose, Richards. If your constituents ask why, tell them the adoption of the resolution would mean the waste of thousands of the public money. That always holds the rabble in check. What do you think about it?"

"You can't buy me!" said Richards, firmly.

"Perhaps you don't owe it to yourself to do the best you can, if you want to look at it that way," said Burton. "But perhaps you do owe it to the girl you hope to marry."

Richards possessed a mind that worked quickly. It did so now. There



"We can be married at the end of the session"

might be some truth in Burton's words, he reasoned. He certainly owed something to the girl. And he knew his future was assured if he joined forces with the Governor. The Governor had made other men—had broken other men.

Burton had wit enough to understand the mental struggle which Richards was undergoing. He added fuel to the fire.

"Perhaps you owe it to her," he went on, "to do the very best you can, to give her the very best home you can, all the comforts you can. And all we ask you to do is to report unfavorably on that resolution. We'll see that you are protected as far as your constituents are concerned—we'll make those constituents send you to congress. Think of the girl, man!"

"I am thinking of her," said Richards, frankly. "And I'm thinking, also, of those poor children at the orphans' home, of those unfortunates at the asylum. God, how I wish I could forget what I saw there!"

"Rot! A few maniacs—a few brats!"

Richards whirled upon him.

"I know a man who has a mother in the asylum!" he cried. "I knew her before she became insane, and she was a good, kind old lady. Trouble drove away her reason, and the state took her from her son and put her in that institution, promising to guard her carefully, care for her tenderly. I saw her when I was there—a poor, old woman, with not clothes enough to keep her warm, sleeping on a hard cot under a thin quilt when the state should have furnished a thick blanket, eating food such as she would have thrown to the dogs in her days of fortune!"

"A case now and then, perhaps—"

Richards seemed not to hear him.

"And at the orphans' home I saw two tots whose father I knew, before his life was crushed out on the railroad. The state took them because there was no

one else to take them. Those two babies, not old enough to know good from evil, ate scraps of strong meat poorly cooked, and drank thin soup, ran about with unwashed faces, fought out their little troubles in the darkness of misunderstanding, because you and your ring have pocketed the money which should have gone as salaries to kind matrons, as payment for good food. These are some of the things you are asking me to forget."

Burton smiled at the legislator again.

"My friend," he said, "the world is full of such unfortunates. We cannot take their sorrows upon our own shoulders."

"Perhaps not; but we can do a little—"

"Even at the cost of comfort for our loved ones?" asked Burton. "Think of yourself, your future; think of the girl!"

Richards turned away and looked through the window at the busy street below.

"Say that you'll report unfavorably, and let me carry word to the Governor that you are one of us. You'll get evidences of his friendship almost immediately. He never deserts his friends."

"That's the only good thing I ever heard of him—he never deserts his friends," said Richards.

"And he never forgives his enemies," added Burton, significantly. "You know what he can do to an enemy. Remember Hallowell, whom he crushed and drove out of the state, a wrecked and ruined man! Don't be another Hallowell, Richards! Think of the girl!"

Richards whirled upon him.

"I'm doing just as you suggest—thinking of the girl," he said. "Come to me to-morrow night; I'll let you know!"

### III

That evening after adjournment Richards ran out on the suburban train to see the girl.

"I have something important to talk about," he said. "Let's take a walk."

They passed up the village street, bowing and speaking to their friends. The town knew them for lovers—and the town was still old-fashioned enough to love lovers. On and on they walked until they were upon the road which ran through the green fields into the country. There they sat down upon a giant boulder beside the road.

"Irma," he said, "one of the Governor's lieutenants has come to me with a certain offer. He wants me to do a certain thing. If I favor him, he will send me to Congress, will see that the mortgage is paid off, will send me rich clients and make it possible for us to live here in luxury or in the city in comfortable circumstances. If I refuse him, he threatens to ruin me politically and in a business way; he'll keep me down, force me to dig out a poor living here in this little village among our friends, and prevent

me from ever being anything more than a country lawyer. I am going to leave the decision with you."

"Tell me about it," she said.

He told her everything, of the resolution and what it meant, of conditions at the state institutions as he had seen them with his own eyes. He told her why the Governor wanted the resolution reported unfavorably.

"I do not care for myself," he said. "I owe it to you to be as successful in life as possible. So it is for you to decide."

She said nothing, but arose and led the way back through the village. They were stopped half-a-dozen times by people who knew them. Friends called from porches. Richards was hailed by voters, Irma by young women and old women. At a corner a child ran up to them, and looped her arm within Irma's and smiled up at Richards warmly.

And still Irma did not speak concerning the question he had asked her.

"Can you not give me a decision, dear?" he asked, when they had reached the gate before her home. "I promised to let them know to-morrow."

She looked down at the gravel beneath her feet, and did not speak for several minutes. When she raised her head there was a peculiar light in her eyes.

"It will mean," she asked, "that we can live in the city, and have a comfortable home, and perhaps servants, and you will go to Congress?"

"Yes—it will mean that."

"And, on the other hand, we'll have to stay in this village and fight poverty?"

"Yes."

"Poverty is a cruel foe," she said.

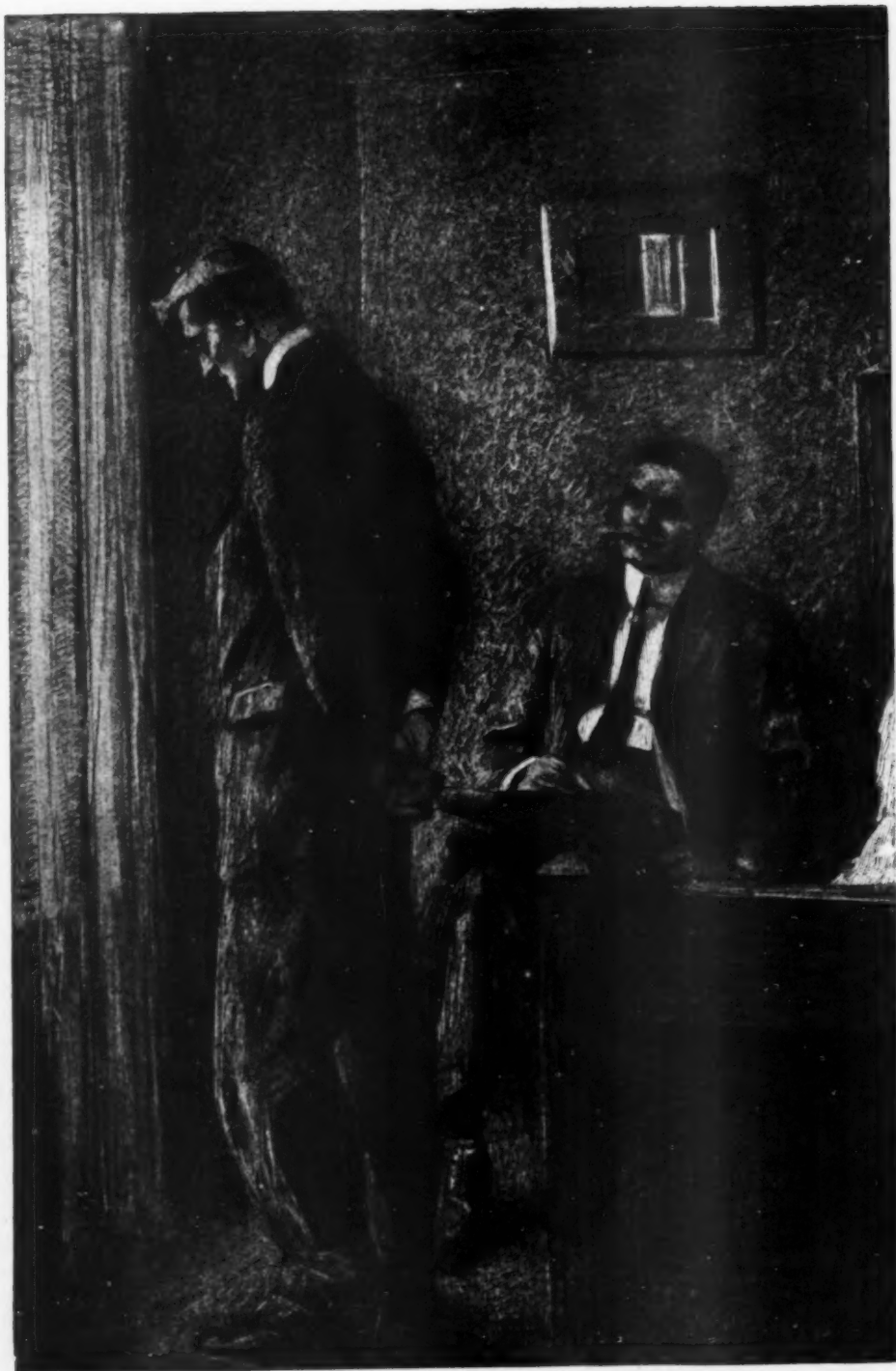
"And—I'd like to see you in Congress, Jim."

"That is your decision, then?" he asked.

She did not answer him, did not look at him. His lips bent down into a thin line. He drew out his watch, looked at it, returned it to his pocket.

"I must hurry to catch the train," he said. "I'll be back Friday night. Take care of yourself, and write if there is any news. Good-night!"

"Good-night, Jim," she answered, softly.



"And if I report unfavorably?" asked Richards



He hurried away down the street. For the first time since their betrothal he had not kissed her at parting.

There were tears in the girl's eyes as she turned into the house. She missed the parting kiss, but that was not what caused the tears. She was testing Jim's manhood, and she feared he would be found wanting. She feared he would travel the path worn smooth by others—subordinate love and honor and all else to the god of political and financial success.

Richards hurried to the station and caught his train. On the way to the capital he sat in the smoker, and spoke to no one. She had decided for the Governor—decided for the luxury in the face of what he had told her about things he had seen in the institutions. Her woman's heart, which should have bled for the friendless children, had turned to stone at mention of gold! But he loved her—loved her enough to sell honor for her, he thought.

When he reached the capital it was midnight, and he went at once to his hotel. He retired, but could not sleep. He couldn't get the friendless children from his mind, couldn't forget the poor unfortunates he had seen at the asylum. He wanted to do something to make their lot better, to send a ray of sunshine into their darkened lives. But she had decided for the Governor—and he loved her!

In the morning he took a cold plunge, ate breakfast, went out upon the streets. He walked, and walked, until time for the day's session to begin. He did little work that day—he did nothing but think, and think! Burton was to meet him that evening, was to come for his answer. It had been bad enough before, when it meant only peace or war as far as the Governor was concerned, but it was worse now, when Irma was arrayed on the Governor's side.

He ate no dinner; he spent the time in his room at the hotel, trying to figure it out. He hadn't quite made a decision when the boy brought up Burton's card, but he ordered that Burton be admitted. The Governor's henchman came, smiling confidently. He threw his hat on the bed, offered Richards a cigar, and sat down before the little table.

"Well?" he asked.

Richards was bending forward, his head resting on his hands. Love was strong—duty and honor were strong. But the little children—God, those little children!

"Well?" said Burton again.

Richards looked up, tapped the table thoughtfully. He supposed he must do it—for Irma's sake.

"Are you going to come in with us—going to report unfavorably on that resolution, and be made a congressman?"

"I have decided—" Richards began.

In the corridor outside arose the wail of a child. Then there were quick voices, and Richards, looking up suddenly, stepped swiftly to the transom to close it.

Burton smiled understandingly.

With his hand on the lowering device, Richards stopped. The voice of a woman had come to his ears:

"—poor little man; his father just died on the floor above; he's all alone, now; I'll try to keep him quiet! Poor, little man—nothing but the orphans' home in his future."

Richards left the transom as it was and turned upon the man before him.

"Go back to the Governor," he said, "and tell him that I refuse to sell him my honor, and my heart and soul. He may ruin me if he will—break me—wreck me as he did Hallowell—but I'll report favorably on that resolution!"

"You fool!" cried Burton. "You dolt! You clodhopper!"

"And tell him," continued Richards, "that until he does break me and wreck me, I'll fight him and his corrupt ring as long as I can stand. I can fight him! I've seen those little children—do you understand?—I've seen those little children!"

"You fool! For the last time—think of that girl of yours!"

Richards stepped to the door and hurled it open.

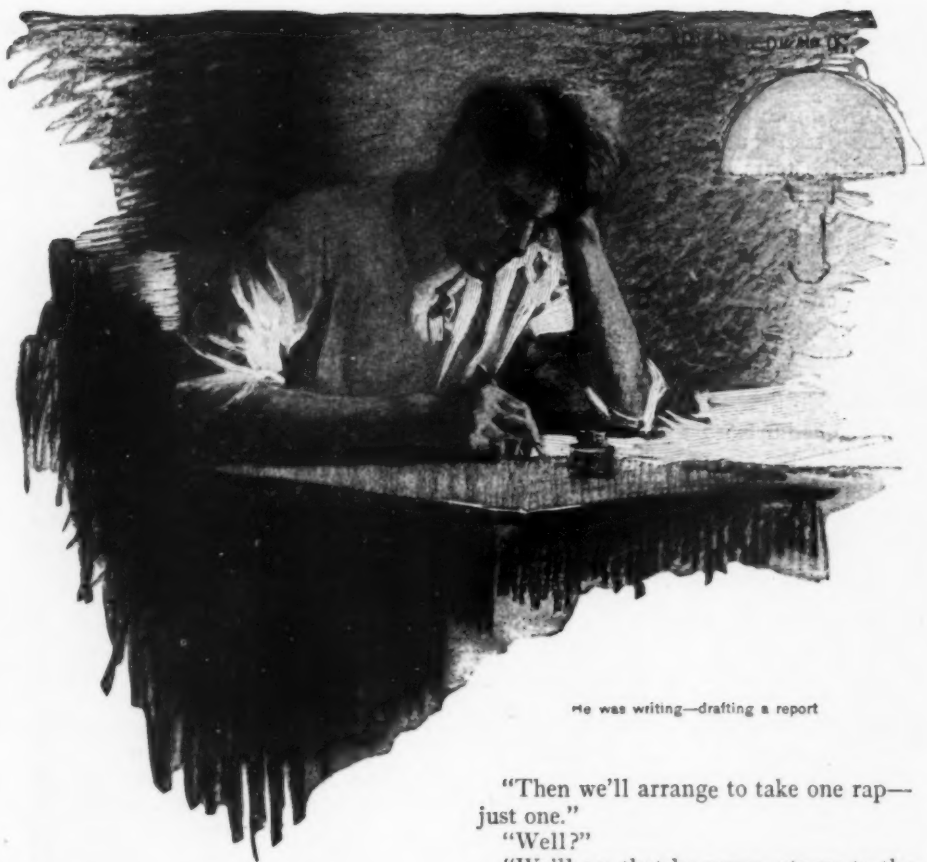
"Go!" he commanded.

#### IV

Burton walked into the Governor's presence like a whipped cur.

"It's all off," he said. "We can't get him!"





He was writing—drafting a report

"We don't need him; we've got Hanley."

"What?"

"Yes—he came through. You needn't ask me why, for I don't know. I had him on the telephone a few minutes ago, and he said he'd been talking to Taylor and they'd decided to report unfavorably Friday-morning. So we don't need your clodhopper friend."

"And there I was, working with him and taking his reform talk!"

"That wont hurt you," said the Governor, laughing. "I didn't know where to find you to put you wise. So we're safe again. Just drop the matter."

"What about Richards?"

"We'll drop him, too," said the Governor. "He isn't worth wasting ammunition on."

"I'd like to take one rap at him: he said some nasty things to me."

"Then we'll arrange to take one rap—just one."

"Well?"

"We'll see that he never returns to the legislature."

Richards, in his hotel room, was not thinking of returning to the legislature. He had pen and paper before him, and was writing—drafting a report. He intended to submit it to the committee, and the action of Hanley would decide whether that report would be majority or minority.

He wrote all night. He destroyed, erased, underscored. When he had finished, the dawn was breaking. It was a striking document in a way. It would create a sensation, though Richards was not sophisticated enough to realize it then. It would have its effect, whether majority or minority.

He told the bare truth in it, told of the scenes at the state institutions; he gave facts and statistics, and between the lines anyone could read the unwritten charges.

There was nothing of importance for

him to do until the committee meeting Friday morning. He had not heard from Irma. He supposed she would break their engagement when she heard what he had done. He'd lose his love and his hope of success, but he'd retain his honor and self-respect. He answered the call of the little children.

It didn't take him long Friday to find where he stood. Hanley had gone over to the Governor. That made his report a minority one. It went in to the House, and with it went the knowledge that the committee had reported unfavorably on the resolution, declaring that the commission would be expensive and foolish.

Richards left the capitol early—a defeated and broken man. That was why he didn't know that his minority report was secured by certain men hostile to the administration, men who made it a business to watch the minority reports. That was why he didn't know that these men gasped at first, then realized their opportunity to down the Governor. He didn't know that the report went to newspapers not friendly to the administration, that charges were made against the Governor, that he, Jim Richards, was hailed as a fearless legislator who was not afraid to dare the executive's wrath.

He didn't know it even when he got on the train, for he didn't stop to buy a paper, as he generally did. He wanted to see Irma, and have it over, then go out in the dark to fight his battle alone.

When he got off at the little station he went up a back street to her home. He didn't want to meet his friends. How could he bear to have them smile at him when he couldn't smile in return? He wasn't ashamed; he was proud, and felt he had the right to be; but he didn't want his friends to observe his sorrow because his future had been darkened.

Irma met him at the gate. She ran to him, and threw her arms around his neck, and kissed him. He winced. What would she do when she knew?

"It was splendid!" she cried. "Splendid! I'm so proud of you, Jim boy!"

"I—I don't understand," stammered Richards.

"I knew you'd do it—that you would-

n't give in to the Governor, even for me! I tried you, boy! And I'm so proud!"

"You know?"—he asked. "You know that I refused to come to terms with them?"

"Why, Jim boy—the papers—"

The papers! He hadn't seen the papers! She ran into the house to get them, and handed them to him. There it all was—his report, with its charges and its plea for the little children. There were the praises because he had courage enough to defy the Governor and make public true conditions. It was thrown loose upon the state, and the Governor had one of two things to do—answer or admit his guilt.

"I—I don't—understand," he stammered again.

"But I do, Jim," said Irma. "You acted clean—that's all. It happens that it came at a time when it counted. It all came just because you were honest."

"And you're glad? But you said—the other night—"

"I wanted to see, boy—I wanted to know."

"But—"

"I gave you my real answer before I spoke," she went on. "But you didn't see it. Our friends stopped us at every corner as we walked back along the road; don't you remember? They called to us from the porches, they smiled at us. And that little girl—she put her arm around me, and smiled at you. That was my answer. Why, Jim boy, no answer was necessary in the face of those things. Who wants to live in the city, to be rich? These people are our friends, Jim. We don't care what the Governor does—if he is powerful enough to do anything."

In the executive mansion, Burton looked across the desk at the Governor.

"He's done us up!" he screamed. "And if he had come in he'd have cleaned up a nice little pot. But he couldn't do that! He had to tear everything to pieces! You know what the dear public will do? They'll kill you off—that's what they'll do—and they'll have him in the Governor's chair within four years—that dolt, that country fool, that Clodhopper!"

# Jack Halsey's Unmooring

BY EDWARD PRICE BELL

Author of "Cyrus Aitken's Clear Call," etc.]

ILLUSTRATED BY W. H. D. KOERNER

WHAT'S the use of bringing it out at all, Jack? The agony's over."

Jack looked at his wife; across his face, shadow-like, passed a twitch of pain.

"You've fought a good fight. Working day and night, doing everything yourself, spending nothing for help these many years, you've almost killed yourself. The paper's dead; let it rest. Stay at home to-night. The children are asleep. Supper over, we'll go for a quiet stroll, you and I alone. We'll walk out the narrow hill-road, where the trees interlace so bewitchingly, and where the moon and stars look so close and so lovely in the river. There was where I learned to love you, Jack; there was where you asked me to be your wife!"

Jack covered his face with his hands.

"Come! In two minutes I'll be ready; in ten minutes we'll be care-free lovers again!"

The man pushed away from the table, straightened himself, and looked down at his wife, with the ghost of a smile.

"Margie, every day you're a fresh wonder. I thought I knew you years ago. Pshaw! A man *never* knows a woman—never will."

"Why, what do you mean?"

"Well, just that. This is my last night's work on *The Mines Mirror*. However good my fight, I've been beaten. To-morrow the sheriff sells me up. We've got nothing but our four babies, a black cat, and a yellow dog. And yet, smiling like a bride, you say to me we'll wander in the old haunts to-night, and be care-free lovers again!"

Margie rose, puckered Jack's thin lips between her fingers, and kissed them thrice.

"Of course. Now let's get ready."

Jack took down his battered straw hat, set it on the back of his head, and folded his arms.

"I'll tell you, Margie. Let me bring out *The Mines Mirror* on time once more. I'll put my valedictory in double-leaded type. Everything will be regular till the bailiff walks in. Then—when and whither you like!"

Stepping out into the dark, Jack paused.

For a moment he stood by the threshold, silent and motionless, then suddenly stole back into the room. Margie had lowered her head on the table, hidden her face between her arms, and was sobbing as if her heart would break. Contriving to force down a great lump in his throat, Jack laid his hands softly upon her hair.

"There, my poor angel, don't cry! To-morrow, once more, the sun will rise over this valley; mayhap he'll bring healing in his wings!"

Making his way slowly towards the office of *The Mines Mirror*, Jack Halsey felt strangely helpless. Somehow all power, all competence, seemed suddenly to have gone out of him. His old straw hat drawn forward on his eyebrows, he walked with his hands in his pockets, his shoulders slightly stooped, his eyes on the pavement. He was tall, loosely knit, and pale. His eyes, neither gray nor blue, were a little of both. His hair was thin and fair. His face was long and almost as innocent of beard as a woman's. The gloom of the man was in a congruous setting. He moved along a street dusty, ill-lighted, and deserted. Right and left loomed vacant shops and houses. To

Jack's hearing, the very leaves of the shade-trees rustled as he remembered to have heard skirts rustle in a chamber of death.

The office of *The Mines Mirror*, comprising a single small room, was at the top of a creaking stairway in the center of the village. Trudging up this stairway, Jack unlocked the door, and pushed into a dark, warm air, redolent of ink and tobacco. Lighting the lamp above the imposing stone, and also the one above his heaped-up case of wet brevier, he lifted a window and looked out into the starry night. On either side of the valley the hills bulked brokenly against the sky. At one edge of the village the river brawled along its rocky channel, the sound seeming to Jack unusually distinct—a circumstance due, perhaps, to the deep stillness of the night. Shutting the window, Jack lit his cob-pipe and sat down in his cane-bottomed editorial chair to think.

Just across the hills was the spot of land where he was born, the youngest of three brothers. When their parents died, they sold the farm and divided the money equally. Frank, the eldest, became a famous engineer, and Joe, the second son, an even more famous surgeon. Only a few days ago Jack had seen Joe in the city, his sharp face clouded by thought, going about his work in a big, one-seated motor-car with six low-lisping cylinders under its protrusive engine-hood. Jack's first impulse was to rush out with a joyous shout of recognition. Then, remembering his old straw hat and shabby suit, he turned quickly down a side-street.

"Not that Joe wouldn't have been as glad to see me as I was to see him," muttered Jack thoughtfully. "We boys always were particularly happy together. True, neither Frank nor Joe has paid any attention to me for many years. Still, I dare believe both think of me often, and love me yet."

In Jack's character, from earliest childhood a moody and sensitive character, burned two deep-seated passions—a love for the old homestead and a love for writing. His share of the money from the farm he stuffed into his pockets. went a little way down the valley to the

big town, bought a small newspaper outfit, and started *The Mines Mirror* in the flourishing coal-mining village within an hour's walk of the old home-place. Here, as a very young editor, he met Marjorie Friend, youngest daughter of the village preacher. Marjorie—everyone called her Margie—was a beautiful girl, with golden hair, blue eyes, rosy cheeks, a fresh, sweet laugh, and a heart full of romance and emotion. At their first meeting Jack surrendered unconditionally. Far from handsome, yet he at once attracted Marjorie; and, after she had talked with him a few summer evenings, strolling by the river or sitting under the big elm in her front garden, she loved him unutterably. Married in six months, in six years they had four children—three lovely girls and a miniature prototype of Jack—and life, not without happiness, was yet hard and anxious enough for them.

"Concerned as I am for the children," said Jack, crossing his legs, clasping his hands in his lap, and staring at the type-covered imposing stone, "my keenest grief is connected with Margie. I can't help thinking how deliciously pretty she used to be. Now, she's almost as pale and thin as I am—worked to the bone, her heart gnawed out. I'll wager Margie could have had either Frank or Joe—could have had anybody. Certainly she was the sweetest girl that ever gave to this poor place a touch of glory!"

Suddenly, violently clearing his throat, Jack struggled up from his chair, as if his reflections were strangling him. Throwing off his hat and coat, he rolled his sleeves above his elbows, and made ready for the night's work.

Had Jack none of the ambition, none of the talent, of the Halsey family?

From the first issue his paper was a brilliant literary, and not at all a bad financial, success. Its quaint poems, its comic matter, its passionate utterances on big affairs—all written by Jack, who wrote everything—were copied by the newspapers and magazines far and wide. From a little boy, Jack had written in the woods, and by the water-side, alone. Nobody, not even his own mother, ever saw anything he wrote in those early days. Most of it, wit and humor, philosophy,



emanations of the religious spirit, poetry, he destroyed as soon as it was finished. The remainder he locked in a rough little writing table in his own room. One night his father found him poring over a manuscript by the light of the moon streaming into his bed-chamber.

"Read it to me, Jack."

But the boy was so perturbed, so painfully embarrassed, that his father promptly left the room, grimly smiling, and mumbling to himself:

"Strangest boy in this country; wonder what'll become of him!"

Lengthy and loose-jointed though he was, nevertheless Jack long had been the champion swimmer at Blue Crag Reservoir, a fine body of water, higher up where the valley becomes a gorge, that attracted expert swimmers from far and near. They said of Jack that, diving and swimming, his sinuous figure threaded the water with almost the nimbleness and swiftness of a trout. If he had physical efficiency, had he physical courage? One day a quack doctor came to the village with a band of musicians and started business in the evening under a gasoline flare. Jack stood in the crowd, listened to the music, followed the quack's harangue, and saw the miners' money flowing into his coffers.

The next morning Jack called on the newcomer.

"If you don't leave town at once," said he, "I'll attack you in my paper, and some of the rude fellows here may consider it in the public interest to hang you."

"If you intend to write me up in your paper," replied the doctor, "you better make your will first."

The following day, Saturday, was Jack's press day, and *The Mines Mirror* contained a blistering arraignment of the quack. When Jack had run off the paper, and sent it out, he put a copy in his pocket and went to see the medical man.

"I've written you up as well as I can," said the tall, pale editor, a queer light in his eyes. "The paper's in the streets. I thought I'd bring your copy myself."

Jack laid the paper before the quack, pointing to the article about him. That same morning one might have seen a

motley crew of itinerants quietly disappearing down the valley road.

Among the many effective things Jack wrote for *The Mines Mirror*, one article stood forth unmistakably as his masterpiece. It was a tribute to the soldiers—to the men who had fought for their country, and come home, and to the men who had fought for their country, and left their broken bodies on the field. Prominently displayed in *The Mines Mirror*, this tribute created a veritable sensation. It was reproduced, within laureled columns, in *The World Tribune*, the foremost daily of the country. Soldiers' organizations everywhere wrote to Jack, glorifying him, and telling him his article had been cut out and framed for their club-rooms. One day Jack was sitting on his tall stool at the case, distributing a handful of type when the door opened and a huge, dark, hairy, brilliant-eyed, smiling man walked in.

"Where's the editor?" asked this giant.

"I'm the editor," said Jack, getting down from the stool and approaching the visitor, with eight inches of type balanced in his left hand.

"Are you Jack Halsey?"

"Yes," said Jack, extremely nervous.

"Did you write that article about our soldier chaps?"

"Yes," answered Jack, faintly, brushing a lock of thin hair from his forehead with the back of his type-soiled, free hand.

"Then, my boy, at last I've the good fortune to meet one of the rarest spirits of our time. Let me clasp your hand, black though it is with the grime of the trade. My name is Bold McEnnis. Did you ever hear of me?"

Jack's lips trembled.

"Hear of me—of course you have. But you don't know the editor of *The World Tribune* as well as he knows the editor of *The Mines Mirror*. Jack, my dear fellow, your paper, this little mining-town paper of yours, has been on my desk every week since it was born. I've been inexpressibly charmed by your verse. I've roared over your drolleries. As to your master-stuff, time and again some strange, poignant quality in it has caused the lines to melt and swim before my





He gained a housetop, drew himself up, and stood on the guttering

eyes. Finally came the climax—finally came that prose-ode to our fighting men—and I cried aloud, 'I'll go up the valley to-day; I'll see Jack Halsey face to face!'"

That dramatic visit had happened a good many years ago, when Jack was at the zenith of his enthusiasm and prosperity. Before Bold McEnnis left the village—he did not go without breaking bread with the country editor and his little family—he told Jack, if he ever wanted to come down the valley to the big town, there was a good post waiting for him on *The World Tribune*. Bold McEnnis never came again, and never wrote; but often Jack heard from men on *The World Tribune* that he was still the big-hearted brilliant autocrat of that powerful journal.

By and by something happened in the village that Jack had not counted on. One vein of coal after another was worked out. There were half-a-dozen deserted shafts, their grey, silent timbers marking the landscape like tall skeletons. The miners began to troop across the hills to other diggings. The general population shrunk. Many shops were closed. Jack's advertising and job-work fell off. He had no heart any more for his jokes. His quaint, sweet verse was missing. His leading articles lacked the old throb of passion. The subscription list steadily shortened, and at last Jack was so heavily in debt that the wheels of the state were in motion against him.

Midnight.

Jack diligent at the case.

His tall stool pushed aside, he is standing. Over his eyes projects a sweat-stained green eye-shade. His face, close-set to his work, is white and sad, yet alight with energy and thought. He is working unweariedly, rapidly, as if he were quite fresh. His long body sways rhythmically, and as it sways the silence is broken by the sure, swift click of the type against the burnished steel of his composing-rule. On one side of the room is the flimsy editorial table, with a column of pigeon-holes rigged up at the back. On the opposite side stands the hand-press, arms in the air, long black

roller ready on the ink-pad. In a corner rises a job-press, with foot-pedal and fly-wheel. Behind the compositor the imposing-stone, black with type in locked chases, shows the paper nearly "up"—entirely, except a part of one column in an open form.

To his valedictory Jack added the last stickful with a deep sigh. Then he walked to the editorial table, picked up an envelope and opened it. The communication was from his old, watchful correspondent at Blue Crag Reservoir. It was written in lead pencil on ragged-edged scrap paper. There was an unusually large amount of it: this was what first struck Jack. Then he noted that it was not, as ordinarily, composed mainly of personal items.

"It's a story," said he, running his eyes down the first page, turning to the next, and reading on with deepening interest.

"Capitally done! Now one knows what makes the river sound so loud to-night!"

There were torrential rains in the uplands. The hill streams were raging. Fields and meadows were under water. The houses of farmers and shepherds were flooded. Much live stock had been drowned. Many people were without food or shelter. The water in Blue Crag Reservoir was rapidly rising.

"What a rattling story," cried Jack, "for the last issue of *The Mines Mirror*!"

Flattening out the copy on the "cap" case, Jack lit his pipe, and fell feverishly to work. His glance was fastened upon the copy, his brows knitted. From the bowl of his cob rose a pale-blue spiral that broke into filmy waves as he moved. Going strong, with his characteristic swing, he made the type fairly rattle into the stick. Suddenly he stopped, removed his pipe, and held his breath, a vague expression in his eyes. Then he put down his stick, strode to the window, and threw it up. The street was deserted, the dark blue heavens a-glitter. Listening a moment, Jack sprang to the door, jerked it open, and bounded down the stairs, bare-armed and bare-headed. Along the street he sped to the nearest corner.

Straight towards him, some way up the cross-street, came a horseman at a grueling gallop, shouting at the top of his

voice. Jack noted the horse's flaming nostrils and streaming mane. At every leap, from under the crunching hoofs, broke showers of sparks. The rider appeared to be a man of small stature—perhaps only a boy. So close did he lean to the horse's neck that the observer could see little of him except a pair of tight-gripping legs and the pointed crown of an old black hat. Jack's first sensation was one of numb bewilderment. Then his blood seemed to curdle with a sense of imminent and prodigious calamity. He felt that he ought to fly—ought to run with all his might for home. Nevertheless, he continued to stand stock-still, stiff, staring, and breathless.

A rush of wind, a stifling cloud of dust, and the horse, wide-mouthed, was on its hind legs by Jack's side, the rider clinging limpet-like to its upright, lathering body.

"Blue Crag Reservoir!" shouted the horseman.

"Blue—Crag—Reservoir—"

"*Warn the town!* I'm rushing straight on down the valley! The dam at Blue Crag Reservoir is cracking and bulging!"

As if dealt a crushing blow, Jack staggered against a tree-box, and pressed his hands to his head. The next instant he lifted his eyes; the horseman was gone. Flinging his arms into the air, he sprang forward, shouting like the other man:

"Blue Crag Reservoir! The dam at Blue Crag Reservoir is cracking and bulging!"

As he ran, bearing hard homeward, Jack became aware that the half-depopulated town was awaking—lights were flaring up. There were hurrying foot-falls, discordant cries. Jack's cottage stood at the opposite side of the valley from the river, just at the foot of the hills. He would gain his home, seize his two smaller children in his arms, cry out to his wife and the other children to follow and rush up the wooded slopes. Chest distended, head back, fair hair flying, bowl-less pipe stem crushed between his teeth, bare arms playing like the arms of a trained runner in an arduous contest, Jack was advancing at a scorching pace.

People in night attire, or only half clad, began to move erratically about the pavements. Jack took to the middle of the street, keeping steadfastly on, crying at every leap:

"The dam! The dam! The dam at Blue Crag Reservoir is bursting!"

Twenty yards from his own gate, Jack became definitely conscious of a mighty, grinding noise—a volume of sound so great his ears seemed quite unable to take it in. Coming from far up the valley, the sound was attended by a distinct, if subtle, concussion. Dimly, using all his power of vision, Jack perceived a dark line swiftly approaching. The sight brought him to an abrupt halt. He appealed to his legs; they would not move. He yearned to reach out towards his loved ones, but his arms hung leaden and lifeless.

Eyeballs fast in their sockets, tongue and vocal chords inflexible, he gasped, and gasped again, but could sense no air. The advancing line, rapidly defining itself, bore a grey, mist-like crest. The crash and roar were deafening. Everything was breaking and moving. The trees were bending and vanishing. Houses shuddered, rolled over, sank, then jumped to view again. There were glimpses of struggling, semi-nude forms, of frantic faces, of ghastly objects floating. Jack's impression was that of abject horror shriveling him to extinction.

In this asphyxiating torpor he was helpless for a matter of seconds. Why and how he first began to move he could not tell. All he knew was that suddenly he was scaling the framework about a shade tree, pulling himself hurriedly up, clutching at the tree-trunk, mounting bough by bough in a frenzied effort to climb above the catastrophic force scouring the face of the valley. Scarcely did he catch his breath during the whole ascent. Time only to rush madly upward, wounding his bare flesh, rending his scanty apparel, unpausing till he circled and swayed amid the slender, topmost branches.

Then fell the blow.

The tree bent as Jack had seen others bend. The leaves and limbs swirled and hissed. About the wildly-clinging man

roared a snowy vortex. In that vivid moment, Jack's eyes fell on his story-and-a-half gable-roof cottage. He thought he saw faces—wonder-smitten faces—at the upper window, but he was not sure; it might have been a picture in his mind. His cottage behaved just as the cottages farther up the valley had behaved—shuddered, rolled over, sank, then jumped to view again. Clearly seeing it reappear, Jack saw no more; the world was rudely caught away from him.

However strange, he did not go down with a feeling of unmixed grief and horror. He and his were to die close together—keen consolation, for they had always lived close together, always had wept or smiled as one indissoluble company. Besides, fate had not been over-tender to them. Most diligent had been their labor. In ideal and in act they had been worthy. According to Jack's reasoning, they, if anybody could, had deserved that the road should grow smoother, and the sky brighten, as they toiled ahead. In reality the rocks had multiplied, and the sun had hidden his face, and the evening had found them footsore, almost without food, and ungladdened by purpose or hope for the morning.

Blue Crag Reservoir had bided its time.

Slowly, patiently, man had built it up. For years he had sported over its surface, and cleft its cool and shadowy depths. It had been beloved, not only by him who had made it, but by the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air. Quick to all the moods of nature, it had mirrored the flowering bushes, and the deep-leaved trees; danced under the rain-drops; broken into music at the touch of the winds; smiled with the blue, and sparkled with the blaze, of the wide-spanning sky—ever there, ever soothing, ever fair with the mask of innocence. At last, all unexpectedly, had struck the hour when the tame monster should reveal his savagery—when Blue Crag Reservoir, shattering every restraint, should make rough and tragic play with those who had erected their firesides, and cradled their progeny, and developed all the labyrinths of their puny ant-hills beneath its towering and titanic menace.

Not at all, by nature, was Jack Halsey a fatalist, fatalistic though were his thoughts when the spray-plumed crest of that wall of water bore him under. An instant only, and his negative vein had vanished. The wet chill on his hot head and body thrilled him with the resolution to live. After all, at his latest glimpse of the world, his cottage was afloat—drifting within a stone's-cast of the rising ground. Possibly Margie and the little ones were yet spared. If he were there—if he could reach the house before it was crushed, or carried down—conceivably, strong swimmer that he was, by hook or crook he could battle his way ashore with his whole family.

His whole family!

How vividly their faces appeared before him!

Seeming to look into their very eyes, the vision was as the strength of lions to his wire-drawn frame!

Speeding with a rolling motion, the water tore Jack loose from his tree-top, and whirled him earthward like a straw. In a moment's time, he was being borne through the tree-top next below him, the leaves slapping his face, the branches striking hard against his arms and legs. Once caught, and held fast, with a vigorous effort he wrenched himself free. Just then he was in the upward movement of the water—a movement that swept him towards the surface as rudely as the downward roll had carried him beneath it. Suddenly, before he could straighten his limbs to swim, he was hurled quite into the air, like a great bass leaping for a fly.

By now the revolving front of the flood was well ahead, and, alighting full on his breast, Jack's skilled arms kept him from again sinking. He found himself in the midst of indescribable chaos—half-submerged houses, fragments of hay and straw-ricks, deep tangles of driftwood, horrible flocks of human and animal wreckage. With a continual crash and roar, masses of buildings, forced by the resistless current into vast wedges, broke like egg-shells. Through the wide din pierced an occasional soul-stricken cry. For the most part, however, Jack was impressed by the deathly silence of the



people. They seemed too closely occupied to utter a sound. There were women clinging to children. There were men fighting demon-like for their wives and babies. Looking round and round, Jack felt an emotion he had never known before—a singular sense of blended wonder and triumph. Nowhere did he see an act of ignominy. Surely now, if never before, his kind was travelling through a tragedy to which the coward's infamy was unknown!

Jack was searching for a gable roof, and green shutters, and a vivid mass of clematis. That was his house. Unhappily, he could descry nothing familiar. All the old aspects were gone. The very hills looked different. Touched by a big log, Jack crawled on it. Immediately it rolled, and again he was in the water. He gained a house-top, drew himself up, and stood on the guttering. The next instant, the house crushed, he was swimming in the débris. Shoals of bodies were moving swiftly with the current. For a time Jack thought they were all human bodies; later he made out that many were the carcasses of cows, horses, and pigs. Struggling towards the shore, hoping to intercept his cottage, he climbed over a house-top, plunged into a stretch of open water, and struck athwart a flock of drowned sheep. Pushing the dead animals to one side, or scrambling over them, he was forging on towards the hills, when a new element suddenly manifested itself.

Had the moon streamed through a cloud-rift?

Impossible, for the dark-blue heavens were still a-glitter, still without a cloud. Furthermore, this light—this abruptly-coming light—could not be moonlight: *it was too red!* Without looking back, Jack guessed what had happened—guessed that the water-wedged buildings on the opposite side of the valley had taken fire. All his energy he hurled into his swimming, gliding from side to side, reaching far out, pulling back fiercely, splitting the resisting flow with first one shoulder and then the other. Again and again the water broke over him, sealing his eyelids, flattening his fair hair about his long head. Not looking back, he could yet picture the spectacle; could see wom-

en wringing their hands on the edge of the burning raft; could see men scuttling from the blazing buildings, swimming with their women-folk, holding aloft their babies, catching, clinging, floating, fighting with desperation against the enemy before, lest they fall helpless victims to the enemy behind.

Jack experienced a profound sinking of the soul. It appeared that everybody and everything were to perish in one lurid cataclysm. Rapidly mounting, the flames reddened all the foaming, wreck-strewn waste. Jack could scarcely believe himself awake; he seemed oppressed by the horrors of delirious sleep. It appeared to him that he was swimming, not in water, but in some fabulous ocean of lights and shadows that leapt, and rioted, and never rested. Swimming, dodging, clambering, all at once his eyes were riveted by something against the hill-side—the gable roof, the green shutters, the vivid clematis! He saw men gathered about. He saw a woman carried ashore. He saw a little boy with his arms clasped about a strong man's neck. He saw two men climb over the house, and, one by one, take out three little girls.

With all his skill and strength, Jack strove to make headway in that direction. But the valley was bending. The flood was sweeping him off-shore. It was driving him full across the track of the blazing wreckage. Abandoning the battle with the current, he turned and raced with it. Race now he must, for the scattered, flowing fire was in his wake. Logs crowded, threatening to crush him. Sometimes he scrambled on them; generally they spun around and threw him under. Nevertheless, now slowly, now rapidly, he made progress. At last he was going swiftly in free water. The valley widened, the hills vanished, the flood submerged a wide expanse, yet Jack did not look back—simply blessed the free water, and swept ahead. All at once, after a long time—he felt he had been swimming for days—on his left appeared high ground, strewn with countless blinking lights. All about him were playing blinding shafts of white radiance. He looked back, and discerned a far, dull glow against the blackness of the upper valley.





He saw a woman carried ashore

Could it be possible?

Was it in a swimmer's power to have covered so great a distance?

Aye; the situation was unmistakable. Beyond all doubt, these were the gleaming lights, this the illumined shipping, of the great city!

Along the receded river, in extended, regular formation, stood a line of weather-beaten army tents, sheltering the homeless. It was nearing mid-day, and the sun shone warm from an azure sky. Outside one of the tents, on a bale of straw, sat four children, three little girls and a little boy. They sat quietly, in a row, seldom speaking, blinking in the sun.

The flaps of the tent were tied back, and the cool, sweet air blew gently in. Within the tent sat a tall man on a box. His haggard face was buried in his hands. Close beside him was a cot. On it lay an emaciated woman, thin and drawn of feature, eyes closed, occasionally sighing, and moving restlessly. By and by, opening her eyes, and looking at the man, she quickly raised herself on one arm, and looked more closely.

"Jack, is that you?"

The man started, anxiously turned, and brushed the hair from her temples, touching her very, very lightly.

"Margie, you must lie down; you must not talk."

"Jack, you really came through it?"

"Oh, yes; certainly."

"We all came through that horror alive?"

"Yes; all of us."

The door darkened, and a bearded man came in, carrying a bag. He looked into the woman's eyes, took her temperature, and pressed his ear against her breast the while he held her thin white wrist in his warm, brown hand. Jack's hollow eyes were fixed with an unspeakable yearning and hunger on the doctor's face. The doctor had been kneeling by the cot; he got up, and looked over his gold-rimmed glasses at Jack.

"Keep her very quiet," said he. "The crisis is past."

Jack rose unsteadily, eyes shining, and pressed the doctor's hand. Then the doctor took his bag, and went away.

"Jack, where are the children?"

"Just outside; they're all right. Now let us not talk."

"But go on, Jack—finish the story you were telling when—when I fell so suddenly and—so terribly—ill."

"Later, Margie. For days and nights you have not known any of us, have not had a moment's peaceful slumber. Later, Margie."

"Did you not say that the boat which picked you up was the press-boat of *The World-Tribune*? Did you not say that Bold McEnnis himself was there, directing his men? I seem to recall your describing how you went into the cabin, and wrote some thousands of words about the flood. Did you tell me these things, Jack, or are they a part of my wild and numberless imaginings?"

"I said them all, Margie; but we must not discuss them now. Please go to sleep!"

"Then, you said, too"—her eyes were abstracted now, and a curious light was kindling in them—"you said that Bold McEnnis, when he had read your story, put his arms about your neck, and told you it was the most masterly piece of scenic and impressionistic painting that ever had been accomplished with words!"

Jack drew his wife's thin lips to his.

"Margie! My poor Margie!"

"Tell me, Jack; *what shall we do?*"

"If I tell you, will you, without a further word, go to sleep?"

"I'll try."

"Then, listen! We're going to live by a sweet little park, where maple trees grow, and roses bloom, and we can always hear the whispering of the water. Bold McEnnis has appointed me chief descriptive writer on *The World-Tribune* at a salary that makes our long years with *The Mines Mirror* seem like a troubled pauper's dream."

The woman started to speak, but checked herself, faintly smiling. A slight tremor ran through her wasted body, and she nestled her head in the pillow. Presently the man crept out, and knelt before the three little girls and the little boy on the bale of straw. They raised their over-serious eyes to his.

"Softly, children; mother is asleep."



"Say, you won't give me away?"

## Competitors

BY RUTH KAUFFMAN

Co-Author of "The House of Bondage" etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY G. W. HARTING

THE buyer of waists for Lacy's Fourteenth Street Department Store was a suave man, always adjusting himself, however unconsciously, to the varying currents in the mind of whatever man or woman he was last addressing. He had blue eyes that laughed and fought and played and wept with Gallic versatility, a jaw that did justice to his race and a fluency of words that never did it injustice. There was a boyishness and a heartiness about him antithetical to certain nervous and restrained habits ac-

quired by "the business," strongest among which were that catch in the muscles of his face and the chewing of the nails of the three last fingers of his left hand when moments pressed or bargaining was sharp. Now he walked into his little private office at the extreme rear of the suit department on the second floor with the accustomed haste of his first morning appearance.

Already his assistant was banging the keys of her typewriter. Stella Blum's undersized, black-clothed form was

erect, her thin, bare arms and her long, thin fingers tattooed with purple from the ribbon that she had changed and with red and blue from the ink of entering, in her books, the latest bills of invoice. Her hair, simply arranged, presented to the approaching employer the smallest head in the shop as he greeted it with his brisk:

"Good morning, Stella."

"Good morning, Mr. Sullivan. It's a lovely day," she replied, hurrying her eyes back to her duties.

The buyer slung off his overcoat and derby and jerked them on the peg nearest the wall, beside Stella's big, black "sailor" and worn, grey jacket. He switched on the electric light directly over his roll-top desk, thrust a hand into his pocket for his bunch of keys and shoved up the corrugated cover. Without sitting, he tore off the "yesterday" from his calendar of engagements and let his eyes run casually among the two dozen letters that Stella, with daily regularity, had, by aid of her pass-key, placed within the desk. The circulars—he knew them all by their one-cent stamps—crunched their way to the waste-paper basket. He made brief notes in pencil on the corners of most of the letters, passing them by almost mechanically, but at one his face snapped to attention.

"Stella!" he said sharply.

"Yes, Mr. Sullivan."

Stella was proud of some information recent to her ears. "Yes, sir," a co-worker had told her, "aint good form for no lady, an' me an' you are ladies just as much as *them*."

Now the stenographer silenced the *staccato* of her machine to deliver strict notice to Mr. Sullivan's words.

"Stella," repeated the buyer, his face nervous. "What the—I beg your pardon. What does this business of Bachen mean? Did they call me up this morning?"

"No, Mr. Sullivan. But a messenger-boy brought that late yesterd'y, just before leavin' time. You wasn't here. He said for me to get it to you to oncet, but I told him he had another guess."

"Hum. I wish I'd had it last night.

They're talking about getting a judgment on those 19-38 waists we bought last March, and I know the firm's going to kick at handing over any more greenbacks."

Mr. Sullivan rose, punishing his finger-nails.

"Honest, they're tryin' the judgment-game?" asked the girl. "Wait a minute."

Stella went to the oak cabinet opposite and pulled open the A-B drawer. In a moment her searching fingers had what they desired.

"This here's them to us on March second. I guess they'll have another think about their law-business. They says if the waists are complained of, you don't need to pay but half; they're A-1 goods, an' you'll never hear a murmur; so we're safe. Them's their very words! An' they was complained of, all right, an' you took 'em at their letter about the half-pay. I've got a record right here on the stub in the check-book."

"Hum. That's good, Stella. I'd forgotten just what was the arrangement. Baxter'll fix them up in five minutes of legal slang. What'd I do without your eyes to help me out!"

The stenographer busied herself in handling a great many unmanageable papers. Mr. Sullivan continued reading his mail, his blue eyes alternately scowling and satisfied. He then dictated, for an hour, a rapid-fire series of notes.

"That'll keep you busy, I guess, for the day. Now for these waists. Did they all come?"

"Six boxes from Martin's Wholesale and two from Klophe's. That's all, aint it?"

"Yes."

Mr. Sullivan stepped to the long table that started at the window and extended half way along the wall of the room. He lifted the cover of the top box of a pile of white paste-board boxes about two feet long, half as wide and three or four inches thick, and removed carefully from the interior a "lady's shirt-waist." He hung it straight, looked particularly at the pattern of the front to see its selling-effect and scrutinized the sleeves to find them true. The seams in-

terested him, the back, the collar. He shook his head.

"No twelve plunks for this," he mumbled, "One-fifty per! Bah!"

He examined the other boxes with an accompaniment of energetic comment: "Trash, just trash—not bad; hardly distinctive, though—well-tailored, but last Spring's style. Ah, this one's pretty! Here, Stella, how d'ye like this one?"

She looked around.

"I'd wear it myself if I had the chancet. Nifty. How much?"

"Sixty a dozen. Guess your pay-slip wouldn't quite buy one *net*, would it?"

"Maybe somebody'll buy 'em for me some day," she retorted, and back to her work she went.

Mr. Sullivan smiled. He frowned over the waist.

"No good, just the same," he finally said. "Wouldn't go with our trade. But," he added, as he fingered another, "this one will, and they'll pay their seven-fifty per. like little ladies. Stella!"

"Yes, Mr. Sullivan."

"Order a dozen of these—we'll see how they go; and—let me see—you can get six dozen of those cheap ones—the nine dollar ones we got the other day. They say down-stairs that they're disappearing like corn fritters. Write 'em we'll pay cash and take our percentage."

He skillfully folded the blouses he had examined, and replaced them.

"There!" he said, "that's over! The others all go back, except these hand-made ones. Get Miss Graham up here after I go and have her try them. Look at this."

"Oh, it's a peach! How much are they?"

"Only twenty-two-fifty for us. Have one, Miss Blum? Go well with that new traveling-suit from *Paquin's*."

But the stenographer's long dark eyes were too still with real awe to consider his raillery. Solemnly she regarded the filmy creation before her, all lace and tucks, with strange disks of both set in like punctuation-points. She thought of her older sister and of how wonderful her older sister would be in this, and, irrelevantly, she thought of a tenement-

room with the new rug on the floor, that which she and her sister had clubbed together to get last Christmas, and she saw a worn, black, horse-hair sofa, a cheap, wooden table with a raggedly fringed center-piece, a tired stove, and newspaper Sunday-edition prints on the walls.

But she said, just breathing the words:

"Aint it swell!"

"Yes; but what's the use of it, anyhow?" asked Mr. Sullivan, sorry because he had regarded lightly what affected her so seriously. "Such things don't count much."

"Do you think that?"

"Of course. Don't you?"

"I don't know. Sometimes, I guess I do. But it's mighty swell!"

"Still, what man cares about such traps as that?" The buyer sat down in his rotating desk-chair and leaned far back as he spoke. "And that's what you want, isn't it?"

"Oh, Mr. Sullivan!"

"That's what most of you girls want, isn't it?"

Stella regarded her long fingers with interest.

"Well, I hope you get the right one," said the man, gently. "You deserve the best, Stella. What kind of a time did you have at your dance last night?"

"Oh, swell!" The girl's Oriental eyes lighted.

"I went to a dance myself, last night."

"Did you, honest? Where, then?"

"Oh, up in the Bronx. But I think I'm getting too old for dances. It bored me to death."

"Bored you? Honest? You'd ought to come down to where we was, down to Silver Maple Hall. There's no chancet to be bored there!"

"They wouldn't let me in, would they?"

"Wouldn't let *you* in? Well I guess! Would you come?"

The buyer smiled.

"Yes," he said, "I'd like very much to come."

"Will you *really* come? With—" but Stella, blushing painfully, stopped short



"Yes. Sure. Let me know some time you have a dance there, and I'll promise to look in."

For a moment there was silence. Then Mr. Sullivan stood up quickly and got his overcoat.

"I'm off," he said. "You're a good little girl, Stella, the best ever. Always keep that way."

Left alone the girl blushed hotly. What could he mean? He, the buyer, the handsomest man in the store, handsomer than any of the tall floor-walkers she used to admire when she was only a cash-girl and eleven, twelve, thirteen years old—and Mr. Sullivan five times as rich! What could he mean? He was coming to one of her dances! She hugged herself as she thought of it, and bit the pencil in her mouth so hard that the purple stained her lips. She was sure that she loved him! Wasn't he grand? And he told her—what was it he had told her as he left? She remembered each word, and each word was loud and distinct in her ears:

"You're a good little girl, Stella, the best ever. Always keep that way."

"Always keep that way." Why? Did he mean for *him*? Could he mean that? Her furtive eye sought a lower drawer of her desk, where, concealed under some papers, her handkerchief and her purse, lay her thumbed copy of "Lily's Lover." But he didn't think?—the blood rose to her thin olive cheeks. He couldn't think that! She had a respectable, hard-working family, and he knew it! Oh, no, that wasn't it at all. She hated herself for suspecting. He must mean for himself. For himself that she was to keep good, and wait!

Her head sang and sang with joy. Her fingers, trained to their task, ran a few letter-heads into the machine,



"Here, Stella, how'd ya like this one?"

straightened them and sounded and felt out several of the dictated letters. Her eyes were directed toward the cabalistic red lines of her note-book, but they looked back, back, and asked and answered questions—re-asked, and re-sung the answers. Thought and the movement of her lifting and lowering fingers were separate operations.

Habit sent the agents of labor nervously delving into a small manila paper bag and stuffing through her open lips three or four chocolate-mints. Then habit wakened her by bringing out, next, a two-cent mirror, about the size of a silver dollar, and raising it opposite her face.

She started. Seriously she regarded her small, rather sad countenance, with its dark, Eastern eyes and dark, curling

lashes, its straight, sensitive nose and its thin-lipped, sensitive mouth. The forehead was low, but very broad, and the black hair, curly at the edges—she patted it a little—gave her, it may have been by its simplicity, a strange look that was simultaneously old and childlike. It wasn't a beautiful face—no one ever really saw it, somehow, but herself—but, she knew, it was a very good little face, and, in her own conceit, it shone with love.

She put away the miniature mirror at last, pulled down her shirtwaist with a wrench at the back, and her skirt with more of a wrench at the front, and walked out of the office to the elevator shaft within a few yards. Her small shape waited by the fancy iron grating until the elevator mounted and deposited passengers.

"Say, Jim," she said to the uniformed operator, "get Miss Graham to come up."

"What d'ye think I am, a child's errand-boy?"

He clicked the door fast and continued his upward journey. At his descent, she still waited.

"Go ahead, Jim. I've got to get her an' I can't leave the floor. Mr. S. said for her to be sent for."

"Get someone else. I'm busy. So long."

The elevator was off.

Stella bit her lips and hesitated.

"Oh, cheer up, little one," called the man from midway to the lower story, "I'll get her for you, somehow!"

"I wish they wouldn't all kid me," Stella complained, silently.

A large blond head rose with the elevator. There at last!

And no one could avoid seeing her. Mabelle Graham—the given name was Mabel and the rear extension her own—wore wonderful, straw-colored hair—"natural, too," it was whispered suspiciously—to crown her willowy form. She was tall, but not unpleasantly so, with a swaying, slim waist and a graciously carried body. Her figure was as near perfect as a thirty-six bust measure, twenty-three waist and forty hips could make it, and every garment

she tried on fit her. Her face however, was not too well featured, but her smile was seductive and so winning that many of the salesgirls called her "cat."

"Hello, Stella," she smiled. "Waists?"

"Sure thing. Mr. S. wants you to try on some beauties in here."

Mabelle glided into the office after its present proprietor.

"Oh, aint this just grand!" she exclaimed as she reached for one.

"Put it on," urged the younger. "I'm crazy to see you in it."

"How much?"

"That? Twenty-two-fifty wholesale."

"Well, it's this for me if I ever raise the price!"

Miss Graham was slipping the sleeves over her own fresh, white-lawn ones, and Stella fastened a few of the tiny buttons at the back.

"Grand! Say, but you look fine in it!"

Stella admired, standing a few feet off.

"Don't you think Mr. S. will like me in this?" Mabelle inquired.

She smiled insidiously as she swung her body, and Stella gulped.

"Sure," the stenographer said.

"Why aint you never got a glass in here?"

"What for? The long mirror's out there. Go an' have a look."

Miss Graham went. She examined the waist from all points but less, it seemed to the watchful Stella, from the selling-point than from the possible getting-point. The younger girl wondered how Miss Graham's envelope could bring enough each Saturday night to raise her hopes as high as a twenty-two-fifty waist.

They returned and discussed the contents of the other boxes, the purchases to be made and already made by the firm. But Miss Graham's eyes watched that twenty-two-fifty hand-made blouse.

"Say," she finally whispered, closing the door firmly. "You wont give it away?"

Stella wondered what was coming.

"What do you think I am?" she retorted.

"Where's *he*?" asked Mabelle.

"Gone to see some lawyer about them Bachen waists."

"Trouble?"

"No. But what was you goin' to tell me?"

"Well," began Mabelle, "don't you think *he's* better looking' than Joseph-John?"

Joseph-John was a former handsomest floor-walker.

"Huh! Well, I guess!" said Stella, but she was thinking; and she felt a nameless suspicion filter through her mind.

"No, but honest, don't you think he's grand to look at?"

"Oh, I don't know," the little stenographer made cautious answer. She took down, from its hook, the stiff typewriter tooth-brush and started to go over each key with it. As a matter of self-protection she knew that her eyes must not be seen. "Whatever it is," she thought, "it's comin' now."

Mabelle, meanwhile, nerved her lips for the revelation that she could no longer keep to herself.

"Well," declared Miss Graham, "I think he's stuck on me."

And Stella raised her eyes. In her heart there was amazement and fear, but she tortured her face to mere surprise and interest.

"What?" she parried.

Mabelle the blonde was wrapped in the cloak of her confessions.

"You honest wont tell a soul?"

"Never!" Stella nearly sobbed in an agony for the truth.

"Well, it began by my smilin' at him in the elevator. An' besides, you know, he's always told me everything about himself. We've always pretty much understood each other," and Mabelle spoke with dignity.

"Go on."

"He's always told me things about you, too, Stella," the chosen one magnanimously continued. "He said you was an awful big help an' had such good sense an' how he'd brought you up here from a child. He wants to do somethin' nice for you."

"Somethin' nice for me?"

"Oh, I'm not tellin'!" Mabelle laughed, happily. "But it's the straight goods. Somethin' about a night-school."

Stella knew about that and said so. But it was entirely a business-arrangement, she explained stiffly.

"That's all right, too. Still, he's awful fond of you—I mean, he thinks you're lots of use."

"Oh, go on an' tell me about yourself," urged Stella, an ache in her throat. "I know all about me."

"You're a funny one, Stella Blum. Well, it was last week Friday after you left us that day. An' it was nearly half-past six an' Mr. S. an' I was still tryin' waists. We was all alone—not another livin' soul on the floor! He was fastenin' a lace hand-made an' somehow he kind of put his arm around me—"

Stella jumped.

"Well?" she forced herself to hasten.

"Well, that was *about* all then, but he said I was a stunner an' a very pretty, sweet girl an'—an' things like that, lots of 'em."

"He meant, maybe, you was pretty good in the waists."

"Not on your life! He wasn't thinkin' none of the waists by then. He said somethin' about gettin' married. I spoke about it first an' jollied him about it—of course you know I was always crazy about him, but I'd never given him any chancet. He looked awful queer an' said he guessed I was right, that it was the best thing for a man like him if he only could get the right one."

"What did you say?"

"I said: 'Maybe you *can* get her. But maybe you'd better ask her first.' Then he looked as if he wanted awful to say it, an' looked at me soft, but he just cut short an' said I was bein' kep' from dinner."

Stella stared at her rival, the wife-to-be of her own Mr. Sullivan. As if she herself were laboriously waking from a heavy sleep, she heard distant, metallic, uncommanded tones—a voice that must be her own.

"Honest?" it questioned, "did that happen? You're not kiddin' me?"

"Kiddin' you? It's God's truth!"

The two regarded each other.

"An' that's not all," said Mabelle.

"There's more?"

"No—o"

"Come off. There is, too!"

Miss Graham blushed a little.

"Well, the elevator wasn't lighted an' our hands kind of met—*you* know—an' he squeezed mine an' I think—I think, 'cause he was leanin' over—I think he was just goin' to kiss me, but we reached the main floor an' the lights an' the people scared it out of him! Besides, I kind of edged away, pretendin' I wouldn't let him. I've hardly dared look at him since, I'm so nervous, an' I know he's avoided me, an' I know why he's avoided me, too. He's afraid."

Stella framed another question.

"Do you, honest, think he wants to marry you?"

"Do I think? I *know*."

Again they regarded each other.

"I sure wish you luck," the little one said.

"It's a grand catch, aint it?" Mabelle concluded triumphantly. "Well, I must be off. Them customers pile up when you're not around, an' the girls get sore. Don't you never say nothin', now!"

"Well, I sure wish you luck," Stella repeated, and she spoke now with all the graceful courage of a Lovelace going to the wars.

Mabelle gave a final chew on her gum and got it back into its accustomed place of hiding. She opened the door and slipped to the mirror to consult with it as to the hang of her skirt, to prove by it that there were no wrinkles about her hips, that her belt was even, her collar tight and fastened with straightly-set-in beauty-pins, her hair perfect. Then, at the swing of the elevator-gate, she hurried to that, making conspicuous use of the right of heads of departments to escape the stairs.

Stella closed the door behind the fashion-plate figure. A sob sounded in her throat, but she shook it away.

"An' I thought it was *me*," she said.

She stood irresolute for a space and then produced her pass-key and opened Mr. Sullivan's desk. With studied care she dusted every article and even removed the slightly inked blotter to replace it by a fresh one of a brighter color. Tears blinded her dark eyes and wet the lashes,

and she hated herself for being weak. Her hand brushed "Lily's Lover" and she recalled that Lily was always brave "in spite of poverty, misfortune, pain and contempt." She dropped a thick glass paperweight and, in her speed to recover it from the floor, dashed her head against the side of her own desk. The blow induced her to end her dusting and to arrange her typewriter for work. She sat down and started, but a picture interposed itself between her eyes and the paper—a picture of Mr. Sullivan, broad-shouldered, handsome, his blue eyes smiling kindly—the ideal, generous, thoughtful employer and friend—and the picture made her spell "receive" "resieve." She rubbed the letters so viciously that the paper tore. Again she started, but got no farther than "Dear Sir" when she bethought her of that twenty-two-fifty waist. It lay there, outside its box, tempting one to don it. It was so soft, so sheer, so grand with its lace and tucks. Hadn't Miss Graham looked swell in it! She hated Miss Graham. Miss Graham looked so like a lady; Stella glanced at her short, underformed body and her skimmed skirt and again, irrelevantly, thought of the rug they had bought for Christmas and the room in their tenement.

"She said Mr. S. was fond of me—'cause I was of use! He told her about sendin' me to night-school; I don't believe he said it; it was our secret! But she makes him tell her things, she's so sly-like: it aint his fault. An' he was goin' to kiss her an' he's embarrassed of her now."

She regarded sullenly a tear that splashed to the waist.

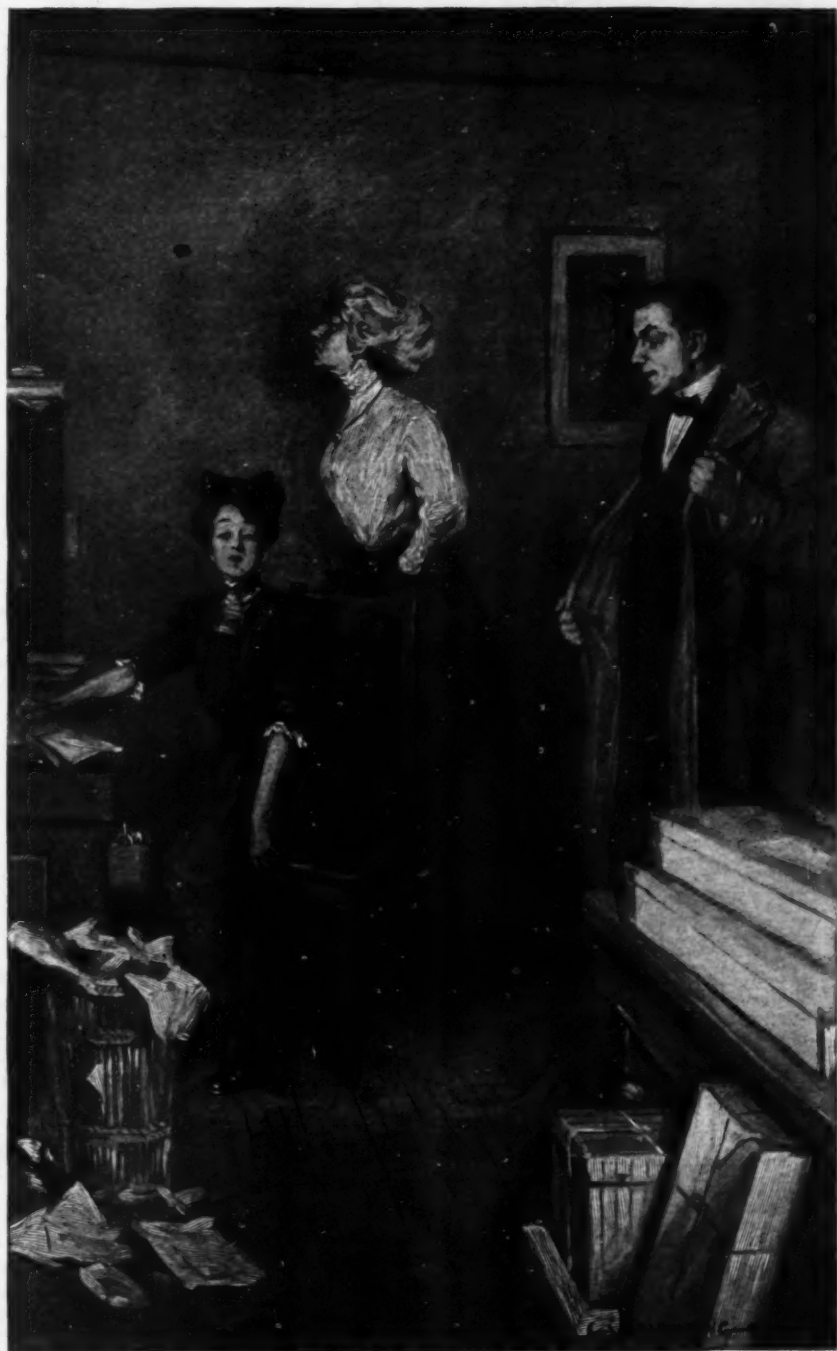
"I don't believe he's goin' to marry her. It might be somethin' else; maybe she's temptin' him to somethin' else. It would be *her*. She's not true. She don't love him like me—an' his mother. I love him like that, like his mother!"

She wept a little.

"She don't go to his church neither. She said she wasn't nothin' much. Maybe that makes it easier to turn; maybe her people'd be glad for her to be somethin'. But he's goin' to my dance—"

She saw a light.





"Miss Graham, there is a customer on the first floor I'm very particular should be pleased"



"I know; I know. He told me I was good, the best, an' he said to keep so. It's just like in 'Lily,' 'cause she was good an' the other was bad, awful bad, an' Lily had to protect the man. Why, he's always told me his troubles; I've always helped him, an' learned for him, always. An' now, I'm going' to save him; I won't let her have him. I'll save him!"

When he came in, she was certain of the correctness of her verdict.

He brushed through the door with a radiant smile for her.

"Bachens apologized like lambkins before Baxter'd talked two minutes. Well, little girl," he continued, "how goes? All done? Ready for more work?"

He noted that all was not done, and thought he saw by her face that she had been crying.

"Why, what's the matter? Anything wrong?" He put a gentle hand on her shoulder. "Tell me what it is. Do you want to go home? Has anyone been bothering you?"

She sought refuge in other troubles than her latest.

"They—they just treated me like always. They think 'cause I'm little, I'm only a kid. But I'm just as much grown up as them—I'm a woman."

"Of course you are," he answered. "Don't you ever let them josh you into thinking you're not. I'm not going to have them tease you!"

"You do think I'm a woman, don't you?"

"Always," he answered decisively and seriously enough to convince her. "Now cheer up, like a good little girl—I mean good little woman—and finish those letters. We've got lots of work to do together this afternoon."

She looked at him with so much happiness back in her eyes that he knew she was content.

"I know now," she thought. "He needs me—he needs me to help him. We've got lots of work to do *together* this afternoon. An' he knows I'm a woman, not a kid. Yes, I'm a woman, a woman, an' he's comin' to my dance, an' I'm goin' to save him from *her*!"

The next morning, when Miss Gra-

ham entered the buyer's office, Stella hardly raised her eyes from her work, and when the blonde beauty started, in spite of unfavorable signs, to reopen confidences, Stella said shortly:

"I'm busy. Them waists on the table are new. You're to look at them. Mr. Sullivan's orders."

"Don't you feel well?" asked Mabelle.

"I'm very well, thank you, but I got to do my work."

"Oh, indeed!"

Miss Graham picked up each waist in a tantalizingly slow manner and regarded it at her ease.

"Mr. S. said for me to wait here for him. I hope you have no objections?"

Miss Graham arranged herself gracefully in the least uncomfortable chair and crossed her knees. She commenced leisurely on her gum, picked up a morning paper that lay unopened, and proceeded to scan the latest list of divorces and murders. A scornful smile, sickeningly sweet as Stella observed through the edges of her eyes, played on her lips.

"He's comin' to my dance!" sang the thoughts of the one at the typewriter. "I'm to keep good—for him. I'm a woman—he said so—an' I love him, an' I'll save him from her, 'cause I'm good!"

And the other, well enough advanced in woman-art to know what women felt, smiled to herself at the futility of the stenographer's devotion.

Sullivan entered.

"Oh, of course!" he called quickly.

"I forgot I had told you to wait here, Miss Graham. Good morning, Stella."

Both girls turned.

"You know what you said the other night, Miss Graham. Well, I'm grateful."

Stella gulped, and Mabelle looked at him in astonishment.

"You don't understand?" He laughed happily. "Well, I'll tell you two girls a secret. Miss Graham, there is a customer on the first floor I'm very particular should be pleased. I want you to wait on her 'because nobody can do it so well as you. You run along, Stella, and take a peep, and then tell me if I don't deserve congratulations. It's my fiancée."

# The Mulligan Camp

BY ELIA W. PEATTIE

Author of "The Tunnel," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY MONTE CREWS

DR. FRANCIS EVERETT answered with promptitude the ring of his night-bell, for to tell the truth, he had not been sleeping.

"It's for poor Mary Silver, no doubt," he said to himself. "Thank God that I held on!"

He threw his old wine-colored study robe about him and descended to the front door. As he opened it, the purple-black night, brilliant with stars, saluted him, and a cool wind, carrying with it the earthy odors of the night, blew upon his burning face and parched lips. He recognized the form without for Silver's.

"I'm so sorry to disturb you, doctor," said the visitor, breathlessly, "but it seems as if Mary can't endure her torment a moment longer. I know you can do something to relieve her. What are the kiddies and I going to do if you can't get her out of this? You don't think she's going to leave us, do you?"

"How do I know, man?" asked the doctor irritably. "I'm not the master of life and death, am I? Got your horse and cart there? That will save time—I'll not have to hitch up. I can walk back, you know. In five minutes I'll be with you."

He sprang up the stairs, relieved beyond words at the interruption—at the imperative necessity for work. Silver had apologized for taking him from the house; he did not know that in doing so he was pulling him out of hell. It was the third night that he had fought his familiar demon—the old, insensate, crazy thirst for drink. He had felt the approaches of the attack for a fortnight, and, but for the condition of Mary Silver, his childhood friend, who was walking at the very rim of the Dark Valley,

he would have put up no fight whatever. It had seemed to him, looking at his own case with the objective scrutiny of a medical man, that he suffered less in the after-effects if he yielded to his sporadic thirst without too much resistance. The debilitation appeared to be less if the indulgence was not prefaced with a period of emotional stress. "Emotional stress!" In his calm moments he was able so to denominate the scarlet hours of torture, the fiendish gnawing at his vitals, the bestial confusion of his brain. At such times, food had no more taste upon his palate than as if it had been bran; no pleasure, no book, could divert him; the regard of the community was as nothing to him. As for his self-respect, it was submerged in his desire as a drowning man is beaten down, and broken and pounded under by the breakers.

But brave little Mary Silver, whose books he had carried to school, who had met the surgeon's knife with quiet heroism, who desired for the sake of her children to hold on to life with her frail and loving grasp—he had not been willing to desert her. Yet, at the very moment in which he had been summoned by her husband, he had been upon the point of making his way to his old haunts. Where they were, few if any of those who knew and honored him in the sane and useful phases of his career, had any idea. The few who did agreed to overlook his black periods of shame and misery. He bought their silence and their commiseration with his essential and native integrity, and with his intense devotion to his calling.

"It's his inheritance, poor devil," said the men. The women, somewhat less forgiving, whispered: "You remember his father?"

And they remembered—everybody remembered. Even more vividly was the tragedy of his brother recollected. Robert Everett had been four years the senior of his brother, and he, like Francis, had grown to manhood with many eyes watching for the appearance of the hereditary taint. It had not appeared in either son till after John Everett—a brilliant, yet a piteous man—was laid in his grave. Then the periodic thirst for liquor fastened upon Robert, ruined his career in the law, brought his mother to her grave, and ended in his obliteration. He had gone from home under the spell of his infatuation, and had been swallowed up. No trace of him could be found. His brother held to the idea that he had put an end to a life which he found pounding on the shoals, and there had been times in plenty when he had been tempted to emulate him. It was difficult to tell what had withheld him. It may have been his genuine and vital interest in his profession. It may have been Adela Roulet.

She was not a native of his town, but had come from Canada—a soft-voiced, tender-eyed girl with a strangely free and blithe spirit, whom he had loved from the moment he met her, coming from the woods with her basket of trillium on her arm. When, at the end of a year, he told her of his love, he met with an unashamed avowal.

"You know that I love you, Francis," she had said. "It began months ago—my love for you. You are the only person in all the world with whom I feel perfectly and happily at home. Wherever we two were, it would be home to me. And, dear, when I realized this I wept all night."

"You wept?"

"It meant that I must go alone all my life, Francis. I shall never marry you, my dear—my poor dear."

They were walking in the grey dusk of a November day, rustling the dead leaves with their feet, and the chill fell upon him like a blight.

"I'm afraid I don't need to ask why not, Adela."

"No, dear."

"But if I change?"

Even then there was no assertion, no

confidence in his tone. The girl looked at him with swimming eyes.

"If for five years you can call yourself a free man," she said, "I'll marry you."

"Five years! Aren't you cruel, Adela? Our first youth will have passed."

"Why do we talk of it?" she had cried, with anguish in her voice. "They tell me you will never change. Your father was a noble man and he loved his wife and children, but his enemy always kept him tied. You are like him in every way, I hear—the same generous nature, the same ability, the same fatal weakness. Everyone has warned me not to hope, and indeed, I don't dare to do so, Francis. You, yourself, cannot give me the assurance that I may. So we mustn't plan for a future together—we mustn't. If it comforts you to know that I love you, and that I never shall say that to any other man, why take and keep that comfort; but don't expect me to live with you or to be dependent upon you. That would be a sin, Francis."

She looked her meanings into his shamed face and while they stood appalled before the realities of life, the tears gathered in their young eyes—bitter and scalding tears—and fell upon the ruin of their hopes.

Curiously enough he was going over this again as Bertram Silver urged his mare along the sandy road to the outskirts of the town. Perhaps it partly was because the road took him past the little cement cottage where Peter Roulet and his daughter, Adela, lived, back among the butter-nut trees not far from the Silver's. The odor of Adela's honey-suckle came out to him as they passed, and he had a mental vision of how the vine romped up the eaves, fairly throwing its coral blossoms within the white room where his love slept. For she was his love in spite of all—in spite of his bestial thirst, and mad brain and shameful hiding, he kept a place of pure imaginings, in which he housed her inviolably. To say that his remorse was profound for having doomed her to a lonely and frustrate life, would be to exceed the truth. He had made a romance of his despicability, and he compassionated

himself, thinking of himself as one whom the gods had chosen to destroy. The direct, immediate, brutal quality of his selfishness kept him from any actual and sustained consideration for others, although it did not prevent his idealization of the girl whose life he had rendered incomplete.

There was only a dim light burning in the Silver cottage, and as the men ran to the door they were greeted by Mrs. Wembleton, Mary Silver's mother.

"She's sleeping," she whispered, "and the pain's gone suddenly. I'm so sorry we brought you out, doctor! Wont you come in and sleep here on the sofa? We can make you quite comfortable, and give you breakfast before you go back home."

But as duty relaxed the tension, Everett's red demons leaped upon him. He could hardly control the riot of satisfaction in his voice as he said:

"Thank you, Mrs. Wembleton, but I believe I'll not stay. Let me leave some powders for the pain—it may come back, you know—and a few tablets for the heart, if the action should become weak. And, by the way, let me warn you that if a physician is needed and I am not at hand, that you must not wait for me. Send for Dr. Yale—he's young but efficient. Your daughter is in too serious a condition to risk any delay. You understand?"

He lifted his haunted eyes and looked into the weary face of the old, watching mother. She had known him from babyhood and she understood.

So he went out into the exquisite night, his lust consuming him, and turning his

back upon the town, bent his steps toward a group of beached river boats lying beneath a group of ancient willows, and known to outcasts as Mother Miller's Ranch. The road was firm beneath his feet, for there had been a recent rain, and had he been open to any such im-

pression, he would have discerned the purity and loveliness of Nature's face behind her close-en-shrouding veil of night. As it was, he went on with a desperate and evil determination, his throat dry, his eyes hot, his whole being avid for its dehumanizing indulgence.

A mile or more from the Silvers, his path debouched, and crossed the railroad, and he was delayed at this point by the passage of a heavy freight. Several times, as he paced back and forth impatiently, he thought he heard voices and laughter, but it seemed so unlikely that this could be the case, that he dis-

missed the idea as one of those fancies which visited him when his brain was superstimulated by the liquor madness. Then a whiff of wood smoke was blown to him, and with the passing of the train, the voices became unmistakable. Two or three horizontal threads of light became visible also, and as he proceeded, he found himself confronted with a high barricade made of old railroad ties

The wall was fashioned in the shape of a triangle, with one side open to the prairie, and it afforded partial shelter to a gathering of men who lay or squatted around a camp-fire. Above the fire depended a kettle from which arose a soliciting odor compounded of many things,

He descended to the front door





and above the wholesome steam of the stew, scents yet more penetrating asserted themselves—the pungent fume of spirits.

Everett stopped in sharp surprise. Then he realized at what he was looking.

"A Mulligan Camp," he muttered under his breath.

He had heard times in plenty of this institution of the west—this last "hang out" of the hoboes. Here, when the "jag fit" overtook them, swarmed the "short-stake" and "long-stake" workers on the railroads, or the great irrigation projects; here gathered the habitual tramps, the casual criminals, the abject "tomato-can 'bos," pooling their "kale" for the purpose of filling the pot and keeping the pail going. It was the convention of the pariahs, where, safe beyond the confines of town and the scrutiny of the sheriff, they could give themselves up to a week or a fortnight of debauchery, drinking themselves into insensibility, arousing themselves to eat, and in moments of comparative lucidity indulging in something that for want of a better name might be termed sociability.

Everett reckoned that there were twenty men availing themselves of the communal hospitality of this primitive shelter. So miserable, filthy, perpetually homeless and dejected did some of them appear, that the thought occurred to Everett they were not men, but abortions. Their bloated faces and furtive eyes, the indescribable and base incompleteness of them, gave them the look of something more appalling than degeneracy—they seemed rather like wallowing creatures who had not yet been lifted above the primordial slime. Yet, a moment later, they began to assume some of the characteristics of human beings. A man who had been leaning nonchalantly against the barricade of ties came forward with something between a challenge and a salutation.

"How-dy-do?" he said in oracular voice. "Were you wishin' to see any bloke here?"

In spite of the slang, a certain grammatical pretentiousness in the remark, arrested Everett's attention. He looked sharply at the man and saw that he was well, indeed neatly, dressed. His face was

long, narrow and keen, his brow high, his eyes too close together, his air recognizably that of the man of excessive egotism. The physician had no difficulty in classifying the type.

He paused for an instant before answering. The scene before him was new, but in certain of its features it was no more disgusting than similar scenes he had witnessed. It occurred to him that if he were looking for hell—and he knew his quest was for nothing less—this place would serve him very well. A profound, ironical estimate of himself made him pause here, amid conditions that revolted him, with the intention of remaining if he were allowed. The incredible nether-self of this man—who could be useful, and wise, and steadfast—took the dominating hand. He looked shrewdly and avidly at his interlocutor.

"I want booze," said he, succinctly, "and I'll pay for it."

The other regarded him with surprise and suspicion.

"Yer don't belong to our gang," he said. "Sure you don't mean to blow the gaff on us?"

"I want booze, I tell you," Everett cried angrily, and something in the desperation of his tone, and in the anguish of his eyes, convinced the inquisitor of his sincerity. There was, perhaps, among all those men who had been ruined by their inertia or their self-indulgence, or their avoidance of man's burden of responsibility, not one who could match his ferocity of appetite. To drink was their amusement, their one great variation of monotony. Through the doorway of this temporary madness they made their one excursion beyond the miserable experiences of every-day life. But they recognized Everett's type. He was a "speller," and the "spell" was incontestably upon him.

Linotype Bill, the spokesman, drew back with a movement of acquiescence.

"We'll divvy up," he said, "but jes' now we're short of lick. Cigarette, a guy belongin' to the push, has gone out moochin'. He'll be back soon with th' stuff. Let's see some of yer dough."

Everett took a roll of bills from his pocket.



"I want you to keep me going," he said, "till I tell you to stop. And for pity's sake don't let me taper down in the middle. What's left over of the roll is for the gang."

"Right you are," said the other. "An' wot I say I'll do, I'll do. Wont y' hev a taste o' th' mulligan?"

A man with a Gypsy-like face, whom they called "Tricksy," was dispensing the hospitality of the pot. He dished out some of the mess onto a broken plate and passed it to Everett. From sheer inquisitiveness, the guest of this open-air caravansaray tasted it, and was amazed to find it delicious. Onions, corn, pease, beans, potatoes, a little mutton and much rice identified themselves, and if a Creole of the bayous had contributed the seasoning, it hardly could have been improved upon. Everett, who had eaten next to nothing for forty-eight hours, emptied his plate.

The good, hot food put strength into him, and while he was awaiting the return of the Ganymede of this sorry brood of nether deities, he threw himself upon the ground to look about him. Curiously enough, the longer he looked at these men, the less they revolted him. Their eyes, though half-dazed with drink, were watchful; beneath their assumption of stupidity was an inherent keenness, and the expression with which they regarded this man who was still a member of ordered society, showed mingled wistfulness and hostility. Everett felt his senses and his sympathies sharpening. Such extraordinary alertness and perceptiveness usually presaged his periods of indulgence. Life appeared to grow incandescent, to reach some point of indescribable brilliance and longing, and the thirst which tormented him, assumed at times marvelous disguises, so that it seemed as if he were lifted above his usual altitudes of impassioned aspirations. If the hound of heaven had been upon his traces, his poignant powers of understanding, his impulses toward eloquence, could not have been greater. He desired something ultimate—and lost himself in brutish oblivion.

The men were drawing out of the shadows nearer to the blaze, and he felt that their inquisitiveness matched his

own. From boyhood the romance of a camp-fire had appealed to him, and now he felt a wild and grotesque enjoyment in it. He was foregathered with the damned, and he wondered what civilities were current amid Plutonic shades.

The nonchalant man became the voice of the company.

"This th' fust time you've struck a Mulligan Camp?" he inquired. He was now reclining in rather a graceful manner, resting on one elbow, and flourishing his cigarette with an air.

"Yes," said Everett, and then added from the fundamental shamelessness of his soul that hour, "but it isn't the first time I've been on a bender—not by a long shot."

"What name?" asked the dandy ingratiatingly.

Everett smiled.

"Do names go here?" he asked. "What's your name, if I may inquire?"

"Linotype Bill," said he, "and known from Portland, Maine, to Portland, Oregon."

"Well," answered Everett, "I'm known only in this town and not known for any too much good, I'm afraid. As for my name—if I had remembered it, I wouldn't be here."

"Business, then—what business?" insisted the dandy.

"I pretend I can cure men when they're sick."

"Oh, a crocus! He's a crocus," some one muttered.

A husky voice spoke from beyond the smoke:

"I had a crocus for m' pal, oncet," it said. "We piked it t'gether four year and never come t' words th' hull time. We've rode the rods from 'Frisco to Chi.—he c'u'd swing a hammock as neat as Linotype Bill, and f'r days we'd go scootin' along, th' wind howlin' an' th' dirt flyin', and yellin' at the top o' our lungs. Ole Crocus Tom an' me split our las' ball more'n once, I tell yer. He c'u'd batter th' kale out'n a stone image."

There was a brief silence. Everyone had a feeling that the recital was not completed. And finally the husky voice continued, after a choking cough:

"He's croaked now Him an' me wus

drillin' on th' I. C. an' Crocus got shet 'n a box-car. I didn't know nothin' of it. I'd gone to batter a hand-out an' when I come back he'd beat it. They never come on him till they got t' N'Awleams—an' he'd bin side-tracked three days."

There was another silence.

"He wus a square 'bo," added the husky man by way of epitaph.

Linotype Bill had been drawing nearer to Everett. He appeared to think he needed accounting for.

"It may seem surprisin' to a city guy, who's bin runnin' along even an' smooth," he said, "that a bloke should git out an' bum it. But it comes natur'l 'nough. Look at me now. I used t' be as smart a printer as y'd find at th' case. Made m' thirty per, an' had a good woman an' kiddies. Went t' church and had other clo'es. Then th' linotypes come in and I los' m' job. C'u'dn't turn m' han' t' nothin'—tried this an' that, an' my ol' wqman took in washin'. Then I got t' boozin' and she kicked me out. I felt bad at that an' run around like a chicken with m' head cut off, not knowin' what t' do; an' then, who sh'u'd I run into but ole A. No. 1 hisself! He foun' me blubberin' 'side a ditch, an' he yanked me t' m' feet and put his arm in mine. 'Come 'long an' mooch wi' me,' sez he t' me. 'Drill 'round th' worl' an' look at th' other men a-workin'. It makes me roar,' sez he, 't' see 'em sweatin', all sober as jedges, thinkin' life 'mounts t' somethin'. It don't,' sez he, 'it's all a damn joke.' An' he taught me how to batter an eat out'n th' kitchen-mechanics, an' take in the ladies with a jigger on m' arm, and wring 'em with th' horspital spiel, an' to hook m' hammock under th' freights—"

"An' how t' work us an' th' like o' us f'r suckers!" cried an angry voice from the ground. "Never a can o' tom-atoes did y' drop in th' mulligan, Linotype. Never a set-up did y' give us! Spongin', spongin'—that's all you do, an' don't y' forgit it!"

An animal-like growl spread among the prone men around the fire, and Everett looked for a free-for-all fight. But nothing of the sort. Linotype Bill was engaged in delicately cleaning his nails with a pearl-handled knife.

"Yeh keep ca'm, Sparkle," he said in a superior manner. "Yeh know an' th' others know, I've kep th' bulls off'n ye mor'n onct, an' I've mended yeh, whin th' wa'n't no crocus t' do ut. Didn't I keep Bughouse Ben out'n stir? Talked him out! Yeh remember that, don't yeh? An' I foun' ole Baldy's kid f'r him, and mooched from Seattle t' Charleston with him an' dropped him kehlump in ole Baldy's arms. Well, yes, what?"

No one answered. Evidently Linotype Bill had successfully maintained his right to be regarded as a useful member of tramp society.

"I say, Linotype, did yeh reely have a spiel with A. No. 1?"

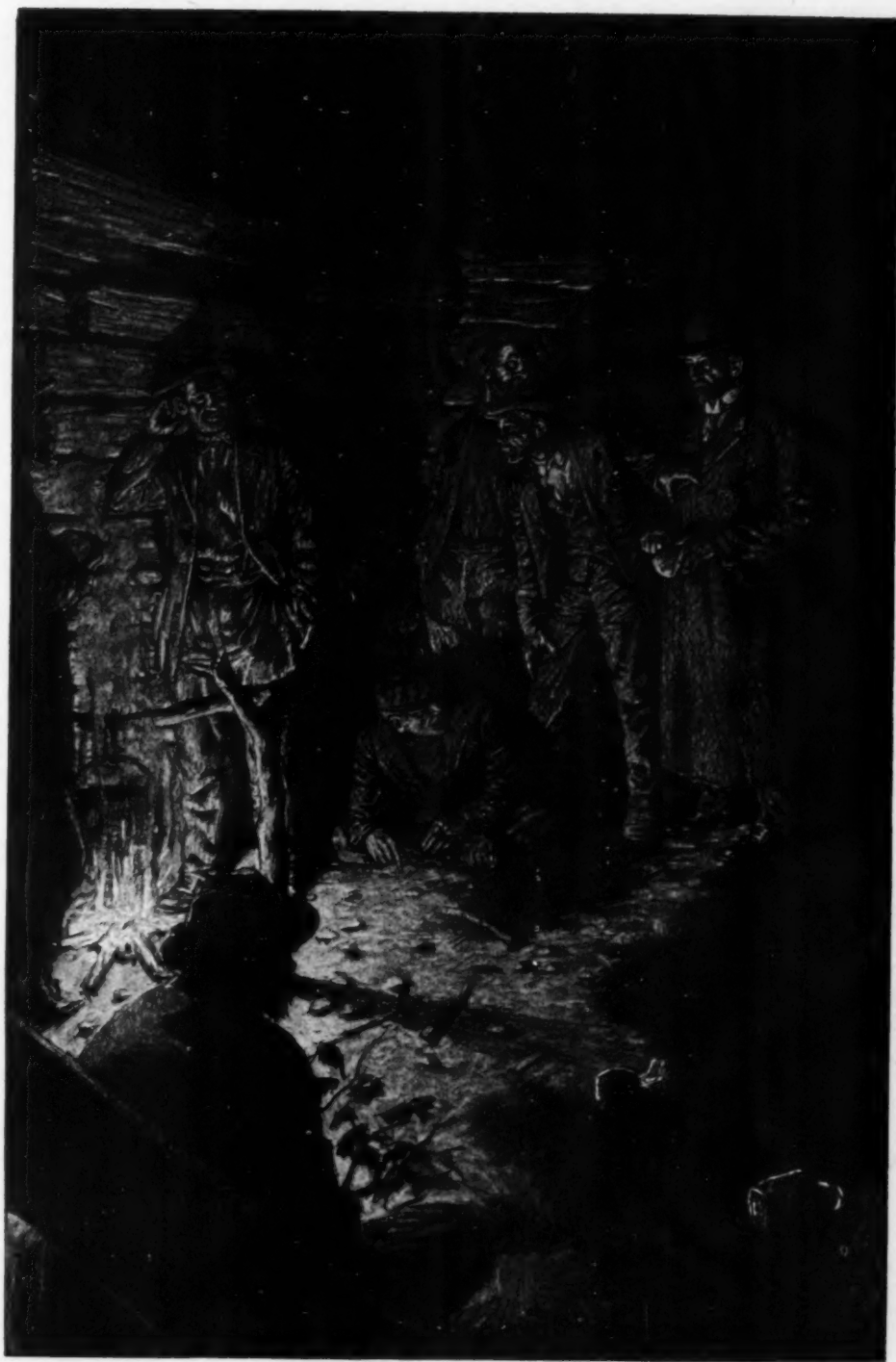
The voice was young, fresh, clear, and somehow, indefinably innocent. Everett, looking up with a genuine impulse of curiosity, saw the light reflected on a boyish and candid face, sun-browned and eager, with the restless and watchful eyes of a homeless lad. Here, apparently, was one who loved a tale for the tale's sake.

"Bet yer life," responded Linotype. "A No. 1 an' me is pals."

"Oh, tell me about him, please," begged the boy. He came nearer, limping frightfully, and sank down on the ground with an awkward movement, near Everett.

"That's an ole yarn," said Linotype, importantly. "He's king o' th' 'boes an' he knows ut. Bin' 'roun' th' worl' four times, hez his monogram on a'mos' every station-house an' box-car in th' U. S., talks everything from hobo t' Chinees and Chinook. Tours Europe like a prince. Wotever we know, he knows ten times better. He kin batter a ball out'n a Methodist minister an' squeeze blood out'n a turnip. An' he don't wear no jigger, n'r put up no tear-startin' yarn. He jes' chews th' rag—an' gits wot he wants. It's th' way he hez with him. If he'd a'wanted t' be president o' one o' th' roads he drills on, he c'u'd 'a' bin it, I reckon. But he preferred to be a bum an' go an' come; an' he's th' wonder child, all right."

"What are you doing here, boy?" demanded Everett sharply of the young fellow who had questioned Linotype. "And what's your name? Do you come from around here?"



"Were you wishin' to see any bloke here?"

A look of something like defiance flared into the young fellow's face.

"I don't tell my name, no mor'n you," he said. "They call me 'Blondie.' I got to moochin' because I couldn't do nothin' else."

Everett already had noticed that his leg was maimed, and now the boy displayed a distorted and pitiable hand.

"An electric wire done it," he said. "I was repairin' f'r th' Calumet in Chi, and I struck a wire on th' raw. I spent nine months in th' horspital, and when I got out I tried to find some kind of a job suited to a one-armed, one-legged guy. Jobs like that wasn't layin' 'round thick over th' landscape, and I got to moochin'."

"And boozing?" Everett suggested.

"Some. Why?"

Everett did not answer. He found it difficult to think of this young fellow yoking himself with these others. The boy appealed to him, and set him thinking of other things. He was not—save for his wounds—so unlike his own brother in certain ways—and not impossibly, Bob himself had come to some such end as this. It was a curious thing, but this was the first time the idea ever had come to him—that Bob might have taken to the road! He had thought of him always as too proud and too fine for that. A swift bullet in the brain, or a plunge at midnight from the wharf, in last, desperate protest against his growing besotment, Francis had been able to imagine. But this! Yet, now the notion obsessed him, and under the spell of it, he lay prone, his face buried in his hands, thinking. The idea had a gourd-like growth, and passed from inception to conviction with a vitality that amazed him. Afterward, he was able to think of it as a telepathic announcement, but at the time he set the intensity of the idea down to the super-stimulation of his brain.

He had no idea how long he lay there, following the paths opened to him by this thought, but he became aware presently of low moans. They came from the remote corner of the barricade, where a long figure lay stretched in shadow. A sort of spasm of perception gripped him

—an unexplainable thing that caught at his vitals.

"Who's that?" he demanded. "Who's ill?"

"It's our main guy," said the Gypsy-faced man. "He flickered this mornin', an' he's -bin pipin' away all day." He came closer to Everett and whispered: "He wont git no better. He's got to croak. When I heard y' wus a crocus, I'd 'a' arsked y' t' see him, but I knowed he wanted to be lef' t' hisself."

Everett leaped to his feet and made his way to the corner. There, breathed upon by all the pleasant airs of night, canopied by the stars, yet befouled with the reek of this company, lay a most abject and tragic creature. His face, once handsome and refined, was haggard and debased, and from its repellant sophistication, looked a pair of world-weary eyes. His form was long and retained indications of old-time grace, but it was clothed in disgusting rags, and his narrow, shapely feet protruded from miserable boots.

Everett carried with him habitually in his night visiting, an electric pocket-lamp, and he flashed this upon the features of the man, who looked back at him with a gaze which changed from insolence and pain, to one of profound—almost intolerable—recognition. Francis began to tremble. He let the lamp fall. Then with his shaking hand he gripped the emaciated arm of the other. For a long time they remained so in silence, and those by the fire could hear their breathing.

The men scented drama, and surreptitiously drew near—though all had the desire not to appear to intrude.

The Gypsy-faced man wore a nervous and mischievous grin.

"Aint it odd?" he said. "You two might be brothers, by th' looks."

Something seemed to snap in Francis Everett's brain. He looked up, cast his glance at the dying man, then at the others.

"We are," he said distinctly, in his rich and emphatic voice—"brothers."

Linotype Bill leaned forward to light a fresh cigarette, and as he blew out the match he said:



"What in hell did yeh do it f'r, Know-in' One? If this wus y'r ole roost, why did yeh come this way? Y' might 'a' knowed ye'd git jiggered."

Everett had taken the sick man's pulse between his fingers.

"Don't talk, Bob," he said softly. "I'll get you out of this. I'll take you home. You're a bit weak, but you've a chance."

The sick man laughed.

"Don't be a fool, Frank. I'm beat and I know it. I suppose that's why I edged back this way. I wanted to get a glimpse of the old place—I even thought, when it came to the last, I might send for you. Instead of that—ain't it curious?—you've come to me."

"What's ailing you? Is it something chronic?"

"What's ailing me? Riding the rods, sleeping out, booze, booze, eating rotten, half-cooked food, going filthy, having no home, thinking hobo thoughts. What's ailing me? Everything! What's ailing a rotten egg?"

"Don't, Bob! You're not in a condition to talk. Here!" Everett took his physician's case from his pocket and forced two small, scarlet pellets over the sick man's lips. He spoke another word of warning, but the other was not to be quieted.

"Do you know why I wanted to see you, Frank?"

"For old sake's sake, Bob?" He had a vision of their days together at home, their stirring excursions, their secrets, of Bob's laughter, of his singing, of how he used to ride the black mare, shouting, his hair blowing in the wind.

"No, no! What would have been the use of that? I wanted to say it needn't have been."

"What needn't have been? Your going away?"

"Any of it—for you or me—the boozing, I mean. I tell you, they settled our hash for us while we were in the cradle. Didn't we hear it whispered before we got in knickers, that we'd go as father went? Weren't we warned to watch out, and made to feel, all the time, that the warnings would be thrown away? Didn't they tak' us, poor innocents, and set us aside for slaughter?"

"I don't quite understand—"

"No, but you will, Frank, you will! Some day you'll discover that the booze appetite is all a myth. I tell you they hypnotized us into making brutes of ourselves. They put a spell over us. They convinced us to the bottom of our souls, that we had inherited the taste. We were taught to shudder, and dread and pray and fear, and by God, after a time they got us there! They got us in the gutter—for which they predestined us. But listen to me!" In spite of his brother's restraining hand, the sick man raised himself upon his elbow, and his burning eyes gleamed out of the fire-shot gloom with an expression of appalling wrath and sorrow. "It's a lie! It's a cheat! It's a legend—a myth, a superstition! Until we had burned ourselves out with the liquor they scared us into taking, we were as fit as the next man."

"You mean that there is no such thing as dipsomania?" inquired the physician.

"I mean it's like hydrophobia—fifty sham cases to one real one—and generally to be diagnosed as blue funk. They fooled us, man—prayed and wept and sighed us into making drunkards of ourselves. Why, I cleared out because I thought I wanted to wallow in drink. And I found I loathed it—but I kept on drinking—to forget that I was a drunkard."

"Why didn't you come back home? If you felt that way, you could have pulled up."

"What was the use? I'd broken mother's heart—at least, I suppose I had. I'd left my girl—no, you didn't know about that, and it doesn't matter now, for she's in her grave. And I'd got fond of—of the life."

"Bob!"

"Oh, I don't expect you to understand! But there have been free, wild days, and no one to account to, and pals who stuck, and queer jokes and ironies, and a chance to laugh at fools! You get through with the compromises and the hypocrisies in a life like this. You don't have to truckle; you don't have to conform."

"Nonsense!" said Francis angrily. "You're made up of shams—all of you—with your 'hot air' and your false sores,



and your begging yarns, and your living at the expense of other men."

The sick man smiled a twisted smile.

"There's two sides to the question," he said faintly, feeling at last the result of his exertions. "I wouldn't like to say just how some of you respectable ones look to us—hoboes."

"He's goin' to croak!" warned the Gypsy-faced man. "Best brace him somehow, crocus! Why don't that blitherin' dago come with th' booze?"

Everett drew a fragile capsule from his pocket and crushed it beneath the sick man's nostrils. A penetrating odor spread upon the air, and Robert Everett struggled back again to consciousness.

"Take some more of these pellets, Bob," pleaded Francis. "They'll give us an hour longer together."

"What do I want of an hour more, Frank, with you or anybody? What does it matter now, what any man says to me or what I say to any man?"

A sharp—almost an explosive—sound of sobbing broke on their ears. It was the boy, Blondie; he was shaking with grief.

"That's my little pal," explained the "Knowin' One," and he called brokenly to the boy: "Shut up, Blondie! It isn't bad—when you come to it. Hittin' the long trail's about the easiest thing we do."

"What d'y mean by it?" demanded Tricksy, "interruptin' the main guy like that an' him a-talkin' t' his long-lost brother!"

"Why—don't he make his peace?" sobbed the lad. "If he'd make his peace, I could stan' his goin'!"

Linotype Bill spoke confidentially to Everett.

"He's religious," he said, in much the tone in which he might have said that he was "bughouse." And he added: "He hates moochin', but what else ken he do? The Knowin' One looked out f'r him, but I don't know what'll come to him now when he hez t' go 'round—alone."

Robert Everett had contrived to raise himself again.

"Frank," he whispered, "don't forget that Blondie cried—for me. He's the— the only—one who will, you know. Could—you—do him—a good turn?"

A moment later the wanderer had reached his place of rest.

At this instant, Cigarette, the young emissary, for whom they all had been waiting, came running toward them shouting:

"Hi! Hi! I gotta it!" He sped toward them like a Mercury, and stopped in their midst, showing his perfect teeth and holding two large bottles above his head. "I hada de luck," he explained. "I sing and dance three, foura saloons, so!"

He was not Mercury now, but Bacchus, dancing with the bottles raised in his slender hands. Curls hung thick from his head and fell into his hot and reckless eyes, as he swayed and leaped. The men tried to stop him, but he would not listen and glided from their grasp.

As a last resort Tricksy, the Gypsy, pulled a revolver from his pocket and pointed it at the glancing feet.

"Stop it!" he roared. "Don't you see the main guy's croaked?"

Cigarette became static, one bottle still aloft, horror depicted on his face. Then he began to whiten and shiver.

"Oh, oh!" he wailed, "I hata croakin'. Alla de tima mal—" He stopped, searching for a word the others would understand. By chance he glanced upon the bottles in his hand. The cork of one of them had been loosened. He tossed one bottle to the men, jerked the cork from the other and poured the burning stuff down his throat. "What's de use?" he demanded, his eyes swimming with the moisture the stinging liquor forced into them. "Letta us dance and sing"—he paused a moment and gave a dramatic gesture of despair—"f'r to-morrow we—croak."

Linotype Bill wrenched the bottle from his hand and half-filling a little pocket-cup, offered it to the doctor.

"Drink it, crocus," he said sympathetically.

The reek of it leaped to Everett's nostrils—seemed to strike him in the face like acid. He staggered away from it, his hands before his eyes. The men were all drinking now, and the very air was surcharged with it. It killed the odor of the flowers, wiped out the perfume of sun-burned grasses, extinguished the wild,

bitter scent of the willows. For one mad moment it seemed to Everett that the air was full of flying and flaming serpents, which spat at him.

But miraculously, the moment was passing. The odors that had assailed him were now filling him with disgust. The fiery serpents—the leaping madness—of his brain was becoming stilled. He was able to look about him, to note the men by the fire, to turn his compassionate gaze upon the slender body of the "Knowin' One"—his boyhood companion—to see that over all this squalor the patient night swung her immemorial stars and that upon these stumbling children Nature shed her perfumed breezes and her peace. To his unspeakable amazement, his desire for liquor had deserted him completely. The conviction that he was through with it now and forever, was as absolute as his belief in the palpability of the rolling earth on which he stood. He experienced liberation as some men experience religion—he was born anew. A great light came into his soul—or rather, it seemed to emanate from his soul, and to shed its pure glory upon the scene about him. And he no longer condemned. He understood—he pitied.

"I don't wish it, thank you," he said gently to Linotype Bill. "Thank you very much—but I shall never want it again."

He walked to his brother, and laid him straight, covering his face with his handkerchief.

"I'll be back soon," he said, "and bring friends with me. No—don't be afraid. They'll understand. No one shall disturb you." Last he spoke to Blondie.

"You can be of use to me if you wish," he said. "I'll make a man of you—give you work in plenty—you've got all the arms and legs you'll need for this particular job. He said not to forget—that you cried for him—Bob. And I'll not—I never forget!"

Blondie had drunk nothing. He had been sitting with his head bowed on his knees. Now he got to his feet and caught at Everett's sleeve.

"What y' givin' me, crocus?"

"Straight goods," answered Everett. "A home, work, a place with self-respecting men."

"Don't fool me," pleaded the other. "Don't—"

"Do I look as if I would? Go sit by him, Blondie, till I return."

He turned his back on the company and walked along the road toward town. The dawn was coming, and a wonderful



"Frank," he whispered, "don't forget that Blondie cried—for me"

clarity spread over the heavens. The birds awakened, and the ground scents greeted him with their pure and familiar salutations. As he neared the home of Adela Roulet, he was startled to see the door flung open, and the girl, clothed in some loose garment, run through it and along the path toward the Silver's cottage. Instantly Everett surmised that she had been summoned. Mary Silver was worse—possibly *in extremis*.

He, too, ran, bounding over the ground with new and exultant strength. He followed upon the very heels of Adela, saw the old mother on her knees and the husband bending over the bed.

Adela threw an imploring glance at him.

"She's dying!" she whispered.

Everett's excitement gave way instantaneously to the steeled calm of the physician. He threw off his coat and rolled up his sleeves.

"Bring the oxygen, Silver," he commanded. "Adela—that saline solution—get it ready. You know how. We'll have her back, Silver! Set your minds on that, all of you, please. She sha'n't go. Mary!" he called. His voice rang bugle-clear—a new voice, proclaiming his mastery of

himself. "Mary!" It was as if his rehabilitation of spirit gave him the right to summon the dying back to life. The sick woman's lids fluttered—opened. "Here's the oxygen, my girl. Steady and deep, now—breathe steadily! Stay with us, Mary—for the kiddies! This one fight, and you'll conquer! You hear me, girl? A mother has no business not to live, eh? I'm here, Mary, and it's right for you to live, so, with God's help—There, steady and deep!"

His strong body, vitalized with new life, his luminous eyes with their strange, high message, his rich and friendly voice, carrying conviction, seemed to fill the room with power. He was directing not only the actions, but the thoughts of all about him.

The old mother was still upon her knees, but her eyes, heavy with weeping and watching, were raised to the physician.

"Your prayers will be answered, I think," he said. "See, there is a little color coming back into her face, and her pulse is stronger."

"I am giving thanks now," she answered. And she looked her meaning into his grateful and understanding eyes.

## Their Happy Home

BY BESSIE R. HOOVER

Author of "Pa Flickinger," "Opal," etc

"WE certainly are the most unhappy couple that ever lived!"

The enunciator of these dire words was Theodore Hardman, a young attorney but recently out of college, and as yet new to matrimony and his profession. He lay on the sitting-room lounge in their small, inconvenient, rented cottage, and spoke thus plainly to Mabel Hardman, his wife.

"As if I didn't already know how miserable we are," was the retort, "without your very disagreeable reminder."

"Why we ever married," continued

the young man, dismally but energetically, his deep voice, with which he meant to sway future juries, now a sort of emphatic growl, "is more than I probably shall ever know."

"We were supposed to marry for love," put in his wife flippantly, as she hemmed on her wedding linen with an unpracticed and rebellious hand that tangled the thread and made clumsy stitches.

"It looks like it now, doesn't it?" inquired her husband sarcastically.

Mabel did not reply; but her thread tangled again in a vexatious manner,

which she attributed solely to her husband's crossness.

"And that disgraceful motto over the door—it simply makes me crazy," complained Hardman, wrathfully.

"But I, at least, am not to blame for that," declared his wife plaintively, her thread breaking. "If Aunt Sarah *would* work it for me on perforated cardboard in magenta and orange, I couldn't help it. And she would tack it up over the door with her own hands when we went to housekeeping."

"I know she did. And every time I see those ridiculously silly words, 'Our Happy Home,' I want to do something desperate."

"But if you had to stay at home all day with it glaring down on you, you'd feel even worse about it than you do."

"What makes home happy, anyway?" inquired her husband, his eyes still on the offensive motto.

"There is only one thing that *ever* makes *any* home *happy*, Theodore," replied his wife, superiorly, "and that is—love. No, don't think I am going to be sentimental, for I'm not; washing dishes and sweeping and marketing have been the death of all my sentiment—if I ever had any."

"But love is not all that makes a happy home," declared her husband quietly, yet in his most dogmatic tone.

As she looked at Theodore lying there, a scowl on his strong, boyish face, Mabel Hardman felt that she must have been very foolish ever to have imagined herself in love with so overbearing and disagreeable a person. He was childlike, and he had no self-control. He might have a keen legal mind, but he was not a success as a husband.

"A great deal more than love is needed to make a happy home," insisted her husband, "take my word for it."

"But one person alone cannot make a happy home. Besides, it's a matter of temperaments. And I don't think, honestly, Theodore, that you would be happy with any woman." She knew that this was a very superior way to talk, but he was *so* unreasonable.

"I sincerely believe you," he responded.

"Then why did you marry?" she asked bluntly.

"For the same reason that you did, I suppose."

"No, it wasn't," she contradicted, evenly. "I married you because you made me. I can always console myself with that."

"Made you!" he shouted.

"Yes, you know—that evening—"

"That evening!" he echoed.

"Why, Teddie!" Her voice became sympathetic for a moment. They were not really so angry as might appear from their conversation; but he was tired from his day's work, and she was growing irritable from the weary monotony of her life. "That evening—when—" She stopped; if he could not remember that memorable evening without prompting, what was the use recalling it to his mind?

"You speak as if one particular evening were differentiated in some mysterious manner from every other evening in our life—so that it stood out distinctively—a sort of a moral motto of an evening—like Aunt Sarah's hideous 'Our Happy Home.'"

"I mean the evening you asked me to marry you."

"Well, what of it?"

"Why—only—" But again what was the use of going on if he had forgotten the witchery of that far-off wonderful evening when quite humbly he had asked her to marry him, and she had firmly refused? Then he had swept away all her opposing arguments like so many cobwebs with his persistent pleading, until at last she had yielded, willingly. But the silence growing unbearable, she felt herself forced to say: "You know you asked me to marry you—and then just made me say 'yes.'"

"I guess I did," he acknowledged, "now that you mention it."

"And it wasn't the right thing to do," she told him severely. "You should have given me more time."

"Possibly I should; but it didn't occur to me, then."

"And I am sure, Theodore, that we will never be happy if one of us constantly strives to domineer over the other."



And you have always domineered over me in every way; you are always setting my opinions aside—"

"As I did when I asked you to marry me—"

"Exactly," agreed his wife. "You have the dangerous gift of conversation."

"But it's convenient for me—being a lawyer. I'd be mighty lost without it."

"I suppose you won your case?" she asked grudgingly, remembering that he had probably had a hard day.

"No, I lost it."

"Oh, Theodore, how could you?" she asked, anxiously.

"It's all right; I got a lot of experience. I see now when it's too late that I might have made a different plea—I'll know better the next time."

"Oh, dear, nothing ever goes right any more," sighed his wife.

"But I am not complaining," cut in her husband.

"And I can see very clearly why things don't come your way oftener in court; it's because you're always so sure of yourself in everything. You just rely on your conversation—and it's accurate knowledge that wins cases," she assured him. "At college your bluff carried you through everything."

"No, not quite everything," he qualified.

"And a wife ought to know all about her husband's affairs; then she could advise him. But you only say, 'I've lost,' or 'I've won.'"

"And generally—I've lost," declared her husband, honestly.

"And you tell me less and less about things, and here we've been married only six months."

"But I never find fault with *your* affairs—your housekeeping, for instance."

"No, never; why should you?" asked Mabel, surprised.

"Why should I?" he echoed, glaring vindictively about the disordered room.

"I don't see what goes wrong here at home," she cried, gazing at him helplessly and wondering what new and disagreeable turn he meant to give this already painful conversation.

"Well, as long as we both seem to be

helping each other out with a heart-to-heart talk, allow me to enlighten you. I'd appreciate a cleaner house; I abhor dust; I dislike to see dishes just slung on the table; I don't enjoy bouquets of wilted flowers; I favor ventilated rooms—"

"Why, Theodore!" she exclaimed in a shocked voice.

But he went relentlessly on: "I like to find my clothes occasionally; I wouldn't ask *always* to find them, for that would be asking the impossible, but just once in a while to stumble upon a garment that was where I supposed it would be—would make life more livable."

"But you never will remember—"

"And we never know where anything is—at least I don't. I should dearly love to teach you the benefit of having a place for everything and everything in its place; but that might look like domineering. I have heretofore refrained from mentioning any of these things, in deference, probably, to that hypocritical old motto."

"But, Theodore, I told you before we were married that I didn't know much about house-work; and I have always looked upon the intellectual life as the first to think of."

"But a man must live—"

"And, Theodore, you told mother just last week that I was doing well with the housekeeping—I heard you."

"My fatal gift of conversation, again," explained her husband.

"But there is so much to do, I never *can* get it all done."

"And yet you were urging me just last week to let you stop hiring the washing and ironing and scrubbing done, so that you could do it yourself. You are not consistent."

"But we need the money so. And a little more or less work doesn't count so much. Besides you know that one reason why I don't get more work done is because I've been trying to keep up my college studies—philosophy and science—which is very much different from reading silly novels."

"The effect upon our home is the same," her husband insisted dryly. "And while we're talking—you let too many groceries spoil, and you leave the gas



burning for hours when it isn't necessary."

"Only once or twice," defended Mabel, "and anybody might forget. And when I was home—"

"Don't talk about *home*," he cried; and then continued, "Nothing runs smoothly here; there is always the continual grind of little things going wrong. And if I don't jolly you up every evening—no matter how tired I am—you're cross or feel blue. And, remember, I never would have mentioned these things if you hadn't begun about my work."

The next morning her husband had either forgotten their unpleasant conversation or had decided to ignore it altogether. When he was gone for the day, Mabel looked around the untidy rooms and her heart sank. She had never done anything systematically, for her mind had generally been occupied with her studies. As her husband had never complained, however, she had not known that he was displeased. And she had considered her studies of far more importance than the house-work.

She had supposed that her life with Theodore would be very different, and that he would make brilliant strides in his profession from the very first. But it was all uphill work with him. And the monotony of their daily life was unquestionably wearing on her. They scarcely ever went anywhere, and there was no money with which to entertain even if they had had time for such pleasure.

As she wandered despairingly about the littered rooms, she decided that she must give up her studies and try, after all, to do the housework as it should be done; that was clearly her duty to Theodore, even if he were disagreeable and exacting. And she wondered drearily if her intellectual interests would dwindle away till she had no thought above her daily tasks.

Determinedly she began, and gradually the remedial influence of work honestly done, made her more lenient towards her husband. After all he was but a boy, and she really could not have married anybody else. She learned, little

by little, that many different elements unite to make a happy home.

At first the work seemed very hard, and it taxed her ingenuity to plan a system of house-work that would be both convenient and economical, and often at night she was so tired from the unwonted exercise that she could scarcely stand. But she was determined to solve, in the best way she could, the problem of daily living, and she found that after all house-keeping was an excellent field for the development of her intellectual faculties.

As the days passed, Mabel Hardman coaxed back their happiness in many practical ways and, without realizing just what was happening, her husband responded, and was cheered and comforted by the well-being of their small home. She forgot to be self-righteous and began to see that her husband carried a burden, too, for he had to earn a living as well as win recognition of his ability as a lawyer. And she discovered that, after all, he was fair-minded; his was the fierce pride of sincerity that would not let him grudge another his utmost credit. And if he was impulsive and outspoken it was in the candor of honesty.

So, gradually, her faith in Theodore's future came back to her; but she was learning that the success such as she had dreamed of for her husband does not come from nothing—it must be earned; just as she was also learning that a happy home does not develop by chance.

One evening as he lay on the sitting-room lounge, Theodore Hardman's eyes again dwelt upon the ugly, worsted motto over the door. Suddenly he was reminded of that far-away evening when he had found fault with his wife and, being a generous as well as an explosive soul, he suddenly spoke with deep-voiced humiliation:

"Mabel, I am not human. I am a cave-man."

"Has anything gone wrong?" she cried quickly, not realizing that his wrath was directed against himself.

"Yes, I have gone wrong. Just look at that accusing motto. No, don't look

at it," he contradicted, "or we'll begin to quarrel again. Don't you remember how I went on one evening—it all started with that motto?"

"Yes-s," answered Mabel, slowly, "but that was months ago."

"I must have been crazy that night! Why, Mabel, you are the most comfortable girl to live with!" For the recent well-being of his home had dimmed the discomforts of those first unhappy months. "I was simply disgraceful to you. And I asked what made a happy home—do you remember?"

Mabel had not forgotten.

"I'm sorry I talked that way."

"But what you said was perfectly true," admitted his wife.

"No, I over-stated it," he acknowledged, "I am apt to. And, Mabel, I am always saying things to you that I wouldn't dare to say to anybody else—disagreeable things. I just do it because I can, I guess," he added ruefully. "You know that flossy-head that runs the typewriter in the office? Well, I simply can't bear her—of course she's all right—but her hair is abominable; it's so yellow it's fairly green. But I'm twice as decent acting to her as I am to you—I *have* to be or she wouldn't stay."

"It's natural for everybody to be more polite to outsiders than they are to their own folks," the girl-woman replied. "You know our milkman—I simply loathe him—his smile is so dreadful—but I always treat him just lovely. I'd never think of treating him as meanly as I do you."

"But that doesn't excuse me; I guess I am simply impossible as a husband. And, Mabel, I can't tell you how much I think of you—as a wife; I can't say some things," he added helplessly, "I can only feel them. And I asked you," he ended remorsefully, "what makes a happy home?"

"And, Theodore—I know—I have learned since then," she cried quickly, "*it is love*; that comes first, but it is more than love, too. It is work—and economy—and common-sense—and fore-thought—and using your brains, that makes a happy home. At first I was selfish and dreamy and called my haphazard reading 'study,' and I thought work was belittling. But it's wonderful how things go now, and I have more time for study than I ever had before. Why, Teddy, we're just *learning to live*. We were only children before. And now," she concluded happily, "will you do something for me—something awful that I wouldn't think of doing for myself? Will you, Theodore?"

"Annihilate the milkman?"

"Oh, no; he's an honest milkman—besides, I don't mind him so much any more—I only used him as an illustration. It's worse than that; it's something that I simply haven't the courage to do."

"I'll do it," promised her husband, springing to his feet.

"I want you to destroy Aunt Sarah's motto, 'Our Happy Home;' but oh, I don't know as you ought to," she temporized as he started towards it, "for what shall I say to Aunt?"

But he had already torn down the offending motto, and was crushing it into an orange and magenta ball.

"I'll satisfy Aunt Sarah," he assured her, "you know I have the fatal gift of conversation."

"That's just why I married you," declared Mabel, loyally. "And it doesn't matter what you say or do, Aunt Sarah always has liked you better than she has me—so maybe it'll be all right."

"I domineer," reminded her husband genially, then he added forcibly, with boyish enthusiasm, "Mabel, we're the happiest couple that ever lived."



She held aloft the pliant, soft body of Hafiz

## A Venture In Flats

BY ROBERT ADGER BOWEN

Author of "In Nora's Absence," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY EDMUND FREDERICK

(See Frontispiece)

CHARTERIS, awakened from a dreamless sleep, lay uncertain as to what it was that had aroused him. Upon his still partly submerged consciousness the telephone bell in his hall jangled with a horrid reminder. Yawning, stretching supple young limbs, muttering a malediction, he swung himself out of bed, and obeyed the impertinent summons.

"Hello!" came a fresh, sweet voice which not even the transmitter could render other than charming, "fourth floor rear? Yes? Is my cat in your apartment? Can you hear me?"

"Yes, I hear—"

She routed his uncertainty

"I've lost my Persian cat. It went up the fire-escape. I thought it might have gone into your kitchen. I am asking all the apartments in the building."

"I'll look," he answered, not too courteously. "I don't know what's in my kitchen at this hour of the morning. Just hold the wire."

"That's what I'm doing—and my patience. Do look!"

Charteris started for his kitchen, the unconventionality of the situation beginning to appeal to him. A certain quality in the voice he had been listening to lingered insistently in his ears. He would like to see the owner of that voice.

And he felt a little ashamed of himself for his abruptness which something in her last words and their utterance told him she, too, had felt, and resented. Yet surely a fellow was justified, when awakened suddenly from a sound sleep after an evening protracted into the early morning, in being slightly indignant when summarily called to account for the prowlings of an unknown neighbor's cat—even if a Persian cat! At which point in his meditations, and just at the kitchen door, he side-stepped nervously as something soft and purring rubbed itself against his bare ankles.

"Damn a cat any way," he muttered, bending down to look the closer at the magnificent, tawny creature that, after the manner of its kind, was making easy acquaintance with the first person that chanced to come along.

Charteris took the precaution to close the window through which the animal had gained admission to his flat, and then went back to the telephone. An impatient voice fell quickly upon his "Hello!"

"Your cat is here—perfectly contented, so don't worry."

"Of course it's contented, but I *have* worried, horribly."

"You shouldn't put your faith in cats," he said, desiring to hear a little more of the voice. "I suppose this *is* your cat?"

"Of course it is! Large—fawn colored—blue eyes—a perfect plume of a tail—Oh! there can be only one Hafiz."

"I have not said this cat is anything like that, have I?"

"But isn't it?" The eagerness in the voice made Charteris smile.

"Why, something, I must admit—"

"Oh!" cried the voice, its owner suddenly remembering. "Forgive me. I'll come right up and see!"

Her receiver clicked in his ears. Charteris dropped his own into the holder hurriedly.

"The devil!" he exclaimed. "*You* devil!" to the cat. "Get off my feet with your purring pads!" The cat fled.

Charteris made a lightning dash for slippers and dressing-robe, splashed his face with cold water, ran a comb hastily

through his sleep-tossed hair, slammed the door of his bed-room, swept hastily into the waste-basket by one dash of his hand the pink satin favor of Salome of the dinner of the night before, and, when the door-bell rang a second after, went with some feeling of embarrassment down the hall to answer it.

She started back at sight of him, while Charteris stood stupidly, his eyes riveted upon the girl's fresh loveliness. He felt himself abominably unkempt, preposterously ridiculous, a hale and sound man caught napping with the sun high in the heavens, and by a girl in whose expressive eyes he read a tantalizingly increasing aloofness. It was she, moreover, who first recovered herself.

"Where is Hafiz?"

"Hafiz!"

"Yes!" And now the ring of impatience in her tones disconcerted him yet further. "Hafiz, my Persian cat? Are you not the per—the man I have just been talking to over the telephone about him?"

"I do not know where he is," Charteris answered, seizing on the initial question first.

"He *was* here?"

"Oh! yes. He was here, and as I shut the window he must still be here. Will you excuse me while I look?"

"Certainly." The reply was unflatteringly prompt.

Charteris went back down the hall acutely aware of the general aspect even a well set-up man presents from the rear when in dressing-gown and slippers; yet he could not, of course, close the door in the girl's face, nor yet could he ask her to come in. Reaching his front room he looked about him for the cat. There was no sign of the creature.

In the next few minutes Charteris cursed minutely every article of furniture he possessed. On, under, behind none of it could he find the cat. Braving the girl's glances he darted through the hall into the kitchen. He looked even in the oven for Hafiz, but in vain. He came out once more into the hall, standing irresolute before essaying the bath-room. Furtively, out of the corner of his eye, he saw the girl still waiting where he



had left her. He jumped as she spoke.

"I am very sorry," she said, he thought, derisively, "to put you to so much trouble."

"It is no trouble; but I can't find him."

"Perhaps if I called."

"Yes," he assented, eagerly.

The girl leaned a little forward, as though willing to let her voice at least get into the apartment.

"Hafiz! Hafiz! Hafiz, dear!"

There came an unmistakable meow, soft and from nowhere in particular. Charteris pricked up his ears.

"You angel cat," said the girl. "Hafiz!"

But there was silence now. The girl frowned slightly.

"He likes high places," she observed. "Did you look on top of things?"

Her tone stung him. After all it was her cat who was trespassing in his flat, and he hated being made to appear ridiculous.

"I thought I'd looked everywhere except up the chimneys," he answered, with a snap to his words. "Perhaps you would like to look yourself."

"You heard him," she averred, "so he is here. Perhaps it would shorten this absurd scene if I might look."

"I may remind you," he retorted, stung still more, "that I was not expecting visitors, or dressed to receive them."

The girl paused on the threshold.

"It was your own suggestion that I look. If you object—"

"Oh! not at all. Pray make yourself at home."

"You are rude," she said, sweetly, passing coolly by him, and entering his front rooms. A glance about them assured her.

"He's on top of that highboy," she affirmed. "Hafiz!"

The cat stirred, rose lazily, and looked down upon them over the edge of the highboy, a world of injured reproach in his weird eyes. The girl turned to Charteris.

"There he is, but I can't reach him."

"And he won't let me," her host answered, having tried in vain, the cat withdrawing beyond the reach of his arms.

"Hafiz!" the girl called. "It's very strange of him," she asserted. "He is always so obedient."

"I am afraid I offended him," Charteris said, unwittingly.

The girl turned upon him like a flash.

"Offended him! What did you do to offend him?"

Lovely though she was she had a temper beyond peradventure. Again Charteris stiffened under the unjust lash.

"I'm ticklish," he said, "and he mumbled and pawed my bare feet. I requested him not to do it."

"You didn't strike him—kick him!"

"I think I cursed him. Doubtless I hurt his feelings."

"You did. Hafiz is very sensitive."

"So are my feet."

"Haven't you a step-ladder, or a chair?" she asked, irrelevantly. "This is getting very awkward for me."

"For you!" he murmured, turning into the kitchen. He re-appeared with a chair-ladder.

"A combination of your request," he pointed out, and placed the steps beside the highboy. He felt a delicacy about mounting them before her, but she seemed not to share this with him.

There was no doubt that he had offended the cat. It evaded his every effort, and it was no easy effort to reach up and across that high and broad piece of furniture. The cat retreated into the farthest corner, and there deliberately turned upon its back, insolently playing, kitten-like, with imaginary objects in the air. Charteris, smothering an imprecation, made a resolute plunge, and grabbed the creature.

A second later he put the angry cat in the girl's arms. His robe had come untied disclosing his blue pajamas, his arms were lacerated to the elbows, he was dusty, and ugly.

"Oh! you poor Hafiz!" cried the girl, burying her face in the cat's soft coat, the while its plumed tail switched convulsively. "You angel cat! To think that you should be treated so!"

And incredible, impossible though it was, with merely a cold little nod to Charteris, the girl went past him down the hall, cat in arms, left his door wide



open, and turned down stairs, not ringing for the elevator.

"Whew!" Charteris whistled. "Lord, what a wife she'll make some poor fool of a lucky man!"

## II

Mrs. Willie Trevor hurriedly hid behind the cushions of the chair she sat in the first of the Six Best Sellers she had been reading, and turned to greet the guest whose footsteps she could hear upon the stairs. She gave a little sigh of relief at sight of the girl who entered.

"So glad you've come, dear," she said. "Not a soul has been in all afternoon, and I'm already dropsical with the cups of tea I've been drinking all alone trying to keep my spirits up. Have you read *The Ditch and the Digger*? If you haven't, don't. I began the horrid thing, and can't put it down."

"I've no time for books just now. What a love of a gown, Nellie! Don't ask me how many lumps; just put them all in. Oh! my dear, I've had the adventure of my life!"

Clare Millicent drew off her gloves, pulled them between her pink fingers, adjusted her rings, and waited.

"I knew you would when you took that neat little flat—apartment. I always have to check myself calling them flats—so absurd, too! What's it this time? A suffragette, or a devotée to the Greek peplos, or just some one who doesn't know that being professedly optimistic is the most fundamental of all pessimism?"

"This is really horrid tea, Nellie. You make it too strong. No; nothing like any of those things you elaborate. Just a man!"

"This becomes interesting." Mrs. Trevor set down the hot-water urn with which she had been diluting Clare's frankness. "If there isn't any mystery about it I'd like to hear. I see you are agog to tell."

Clare Millicent nodded her graceful head.

"I'm just dying to tell," she laughed. "It was too lovely for anything. Such a horrid-nice man, and so rude-polite.

and so handsome and clean in his pajamas and dressing-gown!"

"What!" exclaimed the elder woman. "Now what do you mean by all that absurdity? Mind, I'll not stand for any mystery."

"There wasn't any. I penetrated the very heart of the mystery at the first step. And I'll bet I gave that nice man more to think about than he knows what to do with."

"I won't ask leading questions, Clare, but I am all ears."

The girl munched her wafer and there followed a little silence which she finally broke.

"I've a certain delicacy in telling it," she said, and sincerity rang in her tones. Then—"I'm afraid you are about right, and I need a chaperon."

"Dear me! Was it as bad as that?"

"It all came about through Hafiz." And thereupon she recounted the story of the straying and recovery of the cat. "And, Nellie," she added, "if you think I didn't punish Hafiz well you have another guess coming. I gave him so much prepared chalk, which he abominates, that he hasn't stopped sneezing and wheezing yet."

"But, dear," and Mrs. Trevor shook her head seriously, "you were very imprudent, and I fear a little horrid. And the man must be an odious creature. He should at least have gotten into his clothes."

"He couldn't. I didn't give him time."

"What was his name? Not that it matters. You will never see him again."

Clare bit her lip.

"Now isn't that too provoking. I never thought about his name. But I can easily find out."

Her hostess paused, aghast.

"Child, you mustn't do anything of the sort. Oh! I could shake you, you perverse creature! Not content to give up a luxurious, sheltered home as you have done, to cut yourself adrift from your own people and to descend into the Avernus of flatdom, but now you must do this rash thing! Oh! I should like to box those little ears of yours."

"That was just how *he* looked this morning, Nellie. He was so angry, and



it was no easy effort to reach across that piece of furniture

I was horrid and rude. You should have seen his poor arms where that naughty Hafiz scratched him! Beautiful sun-browned arms they are, too! Do you know if Hafiz hadn't been there I might have offered to kiss them and make them well? But then if Hafiz hadn't been there I should not have been there either—so you needn't look so scandalized."

"Clare! You are worse than *The Ditch and the Digger*. I won't listen to you any more. If this is the result of your experiment at living alone—"

Over the face of the girl there swept an instantaneous change. All the bravado died from her, all the lightness, all the spontaneity of her youth. Her face whitened, and her eyes grew dark with intense feeling.

"My sheltered home! Yes, it was sheltered against everything that wasn't artificial and superficial and insincere. It would have made me a hypocrite, a conniving conscience, a paradox of good intentions and wicked indulgences. So, as you say, I cut adrift."

She paused. Her outburst had externally calmed her. Beneath the surface, however, Mrs. Trevor could see that the fires burned unconsumed. She went on:

"You may laugh, or scold, or scorn—as you please, but when that man's voice came to me this morning, something in it stilled me, thrilled, called to me—frightened me. When I saw him I was in a jumble of emotions. I cannot say he showed up to very good advantage, and yet I *dared* not be nice to him. So I was horrid—the woman's false way of being true to herself. He must think me an impossible thing—while I—I'd give all I have to hear his voice again."

She rose hastily, drawing on her gloves, her hands trembling.

"I know I'm a fool—all kinds of a fool. Anyone is who feels in this world and is honest enough to show it. Good-bye, Nellie."

She was gone.

Mrs. Trevor, feeling as though a whirlwind had swept through her room, sat thinking. Such tempestuous passion was appalling. She had long been worried about the girl, had, in a measure, tried to keep an eye upon her in the

questionable experiment she had undertaken of living alone and apart from the circle of those among whom she had been born and reared. In a measure, too, the elder woman had sympathized and understood. There had been a time in her own life when she had essayed to kick over the traces of a hide-bound conventionality, and found it most awkward and inconvenient. There was much good in the girl; there was likewise a startling potentiality for head-strong self-indulgence. Nellie Trevor sighed deeply for of such, she knew, was the vast kingdom of the deservedly unhappy. If there could be brought some serious purpose into her life to steady her!

In the meantime Clare had gone rather blindly down into the street. She was herself surprised at her outburst; even more surprised at the revelation of the truth which had come to her in full force as she had spoken. She had thought to pay her visit in comic mood; what was this that had swept in instead?

She walked on indifferent to direction, and came face to face with him as he swung off a south-bound car which she had stopped to let pass by. Their recognition was suspiciously simultaneous. Charteris lifted his hat. At the moment an *impasse* in traffic held them together. The girl spoke to the point.

"I am afraid you thought me very rude this morning."

"I did," he answered, candidly.

She straightened, then colored slowly.

"You were yourself. Really, though, I was very grateful," she hastened to amend.

He inclined his head? He was not sure whether he should punish himself further or not. Should he bow, and go on, or should he try to linger further with her? The bearing down upon them of a large furniture van decided him temporarily, at least. Almost lifting her, Charteris made a virtue of necessity, and bolted through an all but impossible tangle of vehicles beyond, and so won the opposite sidewalk. Somewhat breathless, they regarded each other.

"I wonder," he asked, after a mo-

ment, "if Hafiz's introduction would serve to ease your sense of the proprieties and permit me to walk on with you?"

Had he but known it he could not have gained his purpose more cleverly.

"My sense of the proprieties is very deadened, so I am told," she answered him, a thread of bitterness in her voice, "and Hafiz is my idol. Ergo—"

She shrugged, prettily. He turned with her, a curious elation upon him.

"But you are going out of your way," she reminded him.

"My way was but to pay a visit to an old friend who will not miss me, not having been expecting me."

"I hope," she demurred, "that it is not your way to sacrifice your old friends for—"

She broke off in some confusion.

"New ones?" he appended.

"Strange faces," she corrected, severely grave.

"Now, Miss Millicent!"

She looked at him quickly.

"How did you find out my name? I never thought to ask yours."

With that she flushed adorably, and seeing it, he laughed—as, after an instant, did she.

When they reached the entrance to the Park, Clare stopped, holding out her hand which Charteris purposely ignored.

"Now that I have made my oblations to my goddess of Liberty, and defied the banshee of Propriety, I will let you go upon your chosen way. I hope I am forgiven for this morning's misadventure."

"Wait a moment," he said. "You crowd the mourners so! To begin with *this* is my chosen way. To go on with—shall we?" But she shook her head, and remained immovable—"I have nothing to forgive—Oh, well, then, nothing the moment I got into my clothes didn't transmute into the liveliest, pleasantest recollection. And to continue, I shall want to see more of you."

Again she held out her hand. This time he had the discretion to take it.

"See here," he said, however, "you have told me you are a rebel to the dictates of convention. So am I. You live alone. So do I."

"But how—?" she interrupted him.

"Never mind. I do know, and the logical conclusion is I want to come to see you."

"I am not sure," she answered, shaking her head, demurely. "I must seek advice of Hafiz. I could not get on without that cat!" And with that she smiled bewitchingly in his eyes.

He watched her move somewhat hurriedly away, apparently without a second thought of him. Then he turned on his heel, and swung off down the street they had come. Five minutes later Mrs. Willie Trevor rose from her chair—she had thrown *The Ditch and the Digger* into the fire this time—and greeted him cordially.

"This is good of you, Theo. Where have you been all these many months? And how well you look! You actually saved my life. I was having the blues the worst in the world."

"You and the blues should be far asunder. Still your same charming self and surroundings. How's Jim?"

"Well, and making money, and happy to have me spend it. And yourself?"

"Yours, as ever."

"That's not enough," she reproved. Suddenly she became serious. "You never hear from them, Theo?"

"Never a word, Nellie. Oh! the break is final, irreparable. Don't let us talk of that, please."

She hesitated, looking at him with scrutinizing eyes.

"And yet they tell me," she hazarded, "that your father is aging sorely. I can never feel that you were quite right to hold him so sternly to account."

"It is all over," he said, solemnly, "dead and buried beyond the possibility of resurrection! How good your tea is, Nellie."

Mrs. Trevor started. His compliment reminded her of the opposite she had received a few minutes before from Clare Millicent, but it was upon the hand that Charteris held out with his cup for more tea that her gaze rested intently, fascinated.

"What scratched your hand so horribly?" she demanded.

He colored, and the woman seeing



this was answered to her own satisfaction. Surprise, not discretion, held her dumb.

"Oh!" said Charteris, "I was helping a cat down off a wall, and the ungrateful beast turned on me."

"What a brute!" she exclaimed. "Tell me about it."

"That is all there is to tell. I always abominated cats."

She let it go at that for the time being, but before he left she asked quite casually for his address.

"I have lost sight of you quite long enough, Theo." She went into the adjoining room, returning with her ivory bound address-book. "Now," she said, "where are you bacheloring?"

She wrote the address, deftly turning the pages, having done so, to the "M's." Yes; it was as she had thought! The cat and the scratches and the two addresses were identical! She had no doubt of it.

She did some more thinking when he had gone. What a kettle of fish this was to fry! The man who had renounced his home and a fortune rather than marry in haste to meet the terms of an eccentric will; the girl who had renounced uncongenial home and social estate, and cut herself dangerously adrift—that these two should come together and, as it were, with eyes closed, set the springs of action at work to undo in a moment that which it had cost them so much to build up—this seemed an incredibly ironical thing.

If she might utilize this situation! If it did not all go to pieces! If she might bring these two together! There was yet time for Charteris to fulfill the terms of his uncle's will if he was married before he was twenty-eight, and this would mean his rehabilitation, doubtless, with his imperious father who, so report had it, sought only a palpable pretext to unbend from his severity. But was Theodore Charteris interested in the girl? Mrs. Trevor remembered his version of the cat episode, and his blushes, and drew a reasonably safe conclusion.

As for the girl—she thought she could manage her.

With a sense of conspiracy strong upon her, Mrs. Trevor went to her writ-

ing table, drew out her pen and paper, and wrote:

My dear Clare:

Ever since you left me I have been thinking of you and the astounding revelation you made to me of the dire need in which you stand of the restraining hand of a friend. I tremble, dear, when I think of that very improper escapade of yours this morning—of the great impropriety of any subsequent intercourse with this young man. I am sure I need only suggest to you the desirable policy of extreme formality upon your part in any possible future crossing of your paths. I write in haste, but perturbedly.

Your friend,

Nellie Trevor.

Mrs. Trevor laughed gleefully.

"If I know the vixen she will have him eating dinner with her within the week as the result of this caution."

She carefully underscored the most objectionable words, sealed her letter, rose, rang, and ordered it posted at once.

Her answer came with amazing promptness. She found it on her breakfast tray in the morning.

How dare you write me so odious a note—you my last friend out of my miserable past life! I need no "restraining hand," I assure you, and I am quite capable of judging of the propriety of my own conduct. Thank you for your interference, but I shall do just as I please in this matter as in all others.

C. M.  
P. S. He is a gentleman. C. M.

Mrs. Trevor covered her face with her napkin, and laughed until she cried.

### III

Before her open coal fire upon a fur rug of creamy whiteness Clare Millicent lay prone upon her back, her crimson kimono vivid in the glowing light of the flames. In her upstretched arms from whose lovely contours her sleeves had fallen away she held aloft the pliant, soft body of Hafiz. The cat looked down upon her with his inscrutable eyes.

"Do you know what you have done to me?" she asked him, and lowered him until her face hid its mantling blushes



in the tawny fur. "Wrecked the peace of mind I was beginning to command, upset my plans and purposes, introduced a rival in *your* camp. Oh, Hafiz, why did you do it?"

Her voice caught in a half sob. She tossed the cat impetuously aside.

"It was horrid of her to write me that letter," she wailed. "She ought to know I'd not do anything really improper. *He* didn't think so. And it made me send him my card, and I wish I hadn't! Hafiz!"

She drew herself erect quickly just in time to see the cat, doubtless resentful of her discourtesy to him, jump upon the window sill of the adjoining room, and disappear upon the fire-escape outside. The girl was after him in a trice.

But though she coaxed and enticed, the cat eyed her sagely from a position beyond reach of her arms as she stood upon her window sill. In vain she tried to allure him by sight of his catnip ball. Instead of coming to her, he cautiously retreated higher up the iron ladder, uttering slightly incomprehensible words, and Clare hastily made up her mind. Gathering her skirts about her she followed. The action was a signal for further retreat upon the part of Hafiz, but Clare set her teeth, and pursued.

At the top of the first landing she paused, imploring.

"Hafiz!" she besought. "Don't be a beast! Come, Hafiz!"

And now, almost as though it had been written for her knowledge, the girl seized the intention of the animal. Slowly but surely it was making its way where it had wandered in the morning! But perhaps the window, like all the others so far, would be closed! In an agony of suspense Clare pursued the now steadily retreating Hafiz. She thanked high heaven that all the windows by which she passed were closed and the shades drawn for the night. The spectacle of a girl in a red kimono ascending a fire-escape in the night hours without visible reason was one which Clare was willing enough not to furnish.

Distracted by this consideration, and somewhat spent by her arduous climb, the girl paused for a moment for breath,

the cat looking down at her from the floor of the landing above. Clare, accepting this as a sign that the windows on that landing were all likewise closed, began to breathe easier. Yet with her first move toward him Hafiz turned, sprang upward, and disappeared. His mistress uttered a sharp cry of consternation. The window was open!

She called softly to the cat. Within the darkened kitchen all was quiet, but out of the gloom she caught for an instant the uncanny orbs of the creature gleaming like baleful jewels in the dusk. Then they went out suddenly. From the room beyond she could hear the soft thud of the cat's body as it made its leap to the top of the highboy. She put her head in the window, and called softly:

"Mr. Charteris! Oh, Mr. Charteris!"

There was no answer. She had expected there would be none. Nevertheless, her heart beat to suffocation at the next thing she did. Sitting on the low window-sill, she drew her feet up, turned, and slipped down noiselessly into the room beyond.

It was deathly still. By and by she became aware of the singing of the steam in one of the upright pipes from somewhere beyond. Then the ticking of a clock in the hall emphasized the silence.

The girl moved stealthily forward, gained the hall, stood there listening intently. Everything was dark, everything quiet. She moved on more boldly to the front rooms, finding her way by a natural deftness. Under the chandelier she paused, listening again with strained intensity, then, audaciously, turned on a light. The scream she uttered was instantaneous.

Almost at her hand a man she had never seen before sat sleeping in a large chair. At her scream he stumbled clumsily to his feet, dazed and startled. Clare threw a frightened glance about the rooms. They were unquestionably those she had seen that morning.

"Who are you?" she asked, quivering, and drawing her kimono more closely about her. "I came in to get my cat."

The man followed her glance to the top of the highboy.

"Allow me," he volunteered. "I am sorry to have startled you."

He reached for Hafiz, who, unwilling, arched his back and spat viciously.

"Mind, he scratches. He gored Mr. Charteris horribly this morning from that same highboy."

The man made futile grabs.

"He refuses to come, Mrs. Charteris."

Clare started, flushing furiously.

"Who are you, anyway?" she asked once more. "I thought no one was here."

"And I likewise, Mrs. Charteris. I am a newspaper man. The elevator boy let me in, and told me to wait for Mr. Charteris who would be in soon. It is a dear habit of mine to sit in the dark, and I awkwardly fell asleep, believing no one else at home."

She dared not deceive him. Had she not just admitted at least her cat's presence in the room that morning? She turned to him with a flash of imperiousness.

"Give him a sudden yank," she said. "You have on gloves; or let me have that chair, and I'll get him."

The man, preferring discretion to valor, secured the chair, and held it while she got up. In a moment she was again on the floor, facing him, Hafiz purring angrily in her arms.

"Thank you," she said, and fell silent, her face suddenly very white, her eyes fixed immovably beyond him where in the doorway stood Charteris in evening clothes, his face unwontedly grave, his troubled eyes questioning hers, an arm upheld to check the advance of another man just behind him whose amused and meaning smile whipped the hot blood into Clare's face with a stinging rush.

How long the tableau held none knew. It was the reporter who snapped it, speaking to Charteris.

"I did not know Mrs. Charteris was in when I intruded. If not agreeable—"

"It is not," cut in Charteris. "Good-evening, sir."

The man bowed. He was a gentleman. He recognized a situation with which he had no concern. Charteris watched him leave without a word. Then he turned peremptorily to the man beside him who was crowding forward, the meaning

smile still upon his lips, his outstretched hand offering to Clare the flower from his lapel.

"Keating," Charteris said, sternly, "this is Mrs. Charteris. Do you understand?" and held the man's doubting eyes until the meaning smile faded from his lips, and his fingers crushed the little flower they held.

Still Clare Millicent had not stirred, standing as though stunned in the middle of the floor, her gaze riveted upon the stern, set face of Charteris. Suddenly, he went to her, bent toward her, put out his arm almost as though he intended it to encircle her, yet touching her nowhere.

"Come," he said, in a low tone. "It is time you and Hafiz were in bed."

The homely words steadied her. She moved with him beside her to the door, out into the hall, down its dim length.

"It was all because of Hafiz again," she murmured, miserably. "I followed him up the fire-escape hoping your window would be shut, but it wasn't—just like a man! I called your name twice. Then, when I found you were not in, I thought I could get Hafiz out and no one would ever know. But, oh! this is terrible! Do tell me that you understand?"

"Of course, I do," he assured her. "It would have made no earthly difference except for Jack Keating. When he has a thimbleful of liquor in him his silly tongue swings free at both ends, and he sees red and yellow. You must not mind him."

"I did not even see him except just at first," she confessed, naïvely, "for horror of what you must be thinking of me."

He had a sudden, mad desire to tell her what he was thinking—that he was wishing what he had called her was true—that he was trembling with the yearning to let her know this. He pulled himself back to earth severely.

"How are we going to get you down?" he asked. "Have you your keys?"

She grew wide-eyed in horrified perplexity.

"I must go as I came," she whispered.

"You shall do nothing of the kind! Here," he commanded, throwing open

the door of his bedroom, "you must wait in there until I get rid of Keating. Promise me."

She could not speak for the tears that choked her. She nodded.

"Don't," he cried, seeing her distress. "Please don't. Don't worry."

He left her abruptly, and she was alone—with Hafiz.

Keating advanced to meet him as he entered the front room. He bore now the unmistakable imprint of the sober man.

"Was I a blooming idiot, Theo?" he asked. "And where is Mrs. Charteris?"

"If you ever have any ruling desire *not* to be," Charteris answered, "for the

Lord's sake don't look upon the wine when it is white—to say nothing of it when it is red. If a little alcohol brought out the *veritas* in me as surely and baldly as it does in you, I'd confine myself to skimmed milk, diluted."

"That's right. Rub it in. I'm as sober now as a salt herring. Where is—"

"Oh! I heard you. Are you really in your right mind?"

"And clothed. See!"

"Then clear out of here double quick and quietly, and let me get that poor girl back to her flat. She followed that infernal—that blessed—cat of hers up the fire-escape and in here, thinking no one in."



"Hafiz!" she besought, "don't be a beast! Come"

"Holy kittens!"

"Get out with you!"

"Sure!"

He collected hat and coat and gloves with an exaggerated care. Then he paused openly, hesitated, spoke:—

"Say, Theo, is she going to be really Mrs. Theo?"

Charteris faced him squarely, his eyes suddenly very serious.

"So help me God!"

"Amen! Since when?"

"The beginning of Time."

"Oh, Lord!"

When the door had closed upon him, Charteris went down the hall to his bedroom, knocked upon the shut door, and

stood waiting. In an instant the girl met him, her eyes red, her face suffused with weeping, but he thought her surpassingly lovely.

"Now," he said, reassuringly, "that is all right. Tell me your apartment, and I shall climb down, and open it for you."

She told him.

"You enter the dining-room," she said, "but, oh! if you should be seen you will be taken for a burglar! I sha'n't dare breathe until I know you are safe."

Her distress was so sweet to him that he basely made use of it.

"That is so," he pondered, artfully. Then, clumsily: "Would you care?"

Quick as a flash in all the genuineness of her uneasiness she saw the trap, and her eyes lit defiantly. At the moment she was adorable.

"You would deserve it for such a horrid question," she replied. Then her brief defiance died. "Please go," she besought him, "and, please don't get caught."

"Then you would care?"

"Yes," she cried, burying her face in her hands, "I'd care horribly." She lifted her head, her eyes blazing. "For every reason. Now go!"

He knew if he tarried a moment longer he would take her in his arms, so he fled incontinently.

#### IV

After such an experience a budding acquaintance is apt either to burst into the full blossom of a forced friendship with all the sweets and dangers attending or to wither hopelessly and fall dead from the stem. In the present instance it was a foregone conclusion that events would take the former course. Scarce six weeks had elapsed before, in her morning's mail, Mrs. Trevor found the following note:

My dear Nellie:

Although I consider that I have been very justifiably angry with you since the receipt of that first horrid letter of yours and those others you have been periodically sending me since that time, I am going to write you now to say that you need send no more, as I am to be married to-morrow.

Perhaps I owe you thanks in a way for the greatest happiness life can ever hold for me. You and Hafiz between you, working at cross purposes, have won for me a husband whose little finger I would rather have than all the body of any other man alive.

No one else knows about this. No one else must know. He, no less than I, for reasons of his own which I have not tried to discover, wishes it kept strictly secret, but a girl, I suppose, naturally longs at such a time for some friend of her own sex to know of the step she is about to take, and you and I were always friends until you wrote me that abominable letter. So I turn to you just because I've been prompted to by an irresistible impulse, and sign myself once again and for the last time,

Your old friend,

Clare Millicent.

Thereupon Mrs. Trevor sent out three special delivery letters, and proceeded, figuratively speaking, to put her house in order. And in accordance with this plan four o'clock found her expectant in her drawing-room.

She met Charteris without any sign of the inward tremor the sight of him filled her with.

"So I had to take my pride in my hands, and send for you if I was to see you at all! Do you treat all your friends in that way?"

"I have recently," he answered. "That is, all but one."

"Ah! then I fear I am proving myself a nuisance."

He was thinking seriously, and the woman noted keenly the signs in his face of an abounding happiness. She smiled upon him somewhat wistfully.

"Nellie," he said, presently, unaware of her scrutiny, "you can keep a secret as only one other woman I know can, and this concerns her, too. I am going to be married to-morrow!"

"Ah!" Mrs. Trevor had not known until this moment of her relief how much she had been taking for granted in assuming him the man of Clare Millicent's confession. She hid her various emotions now by a well simulated surprise. "What good news for your dear father! Now you will come into all that fortune!"



"I won't," he said, quickly. "Didn't I tell you no one was to know of this, least of all my father? That is why I am letting no one hear of it—that and another reason."

"But tell me, Theo," she urged, "who is she? How long has all this been going on? You will let me be at the wedding?"

"Oh! for a long time." He answered her second question first, her first not at all, her third by another. "You promise you won't give us away?"

"Oh!" she cried with a little laugh, "I'd have no right to do that."

"Then, I guess you can come. I'll be rather glad to have you, to tell you the truth, Nellie."

"Tell me something about her," she asked, for she feared from certain indications that he was beginning to think of leaving. "How and where did you first meet her, and when?"

She waited with keen relish as he struggled to reconcile fact with feasibility.

"Really, since I have known her, time with her has gone so fast and without her so slow that I've lost count."

She laughed.

"And I suppose, likewise, circumstance and place are forgotten. Well, perhaps she will be able to remember, and tell me."

"Please don't ask her, Nellie," he implored. "You see she is—that is she might—What are you laughing at?"

She was saved reply by the entrance of the footman with a card. Mrs. Trevor nodded to the man, holding out a detaining hand to Charteris.

"Don't go just yet, please. I want you to meet my friend."

Into the semi-observed light of the room Clare Millicent came slowly, dainty in her black velvet and white furs and small toque. The slight restraint in her manner at meeting Mrs. Trevor again made her seem even more girlish. She hesitated a moment, then ran into Nellie's outstretched arms.

"I was horrid to you, I know it," the girl cried, "but so were you to me. Now it was just lovely of you to answer my

note by sending for me at once. Tell me what you thought of my news!"

"Dear," said the elder woman, "I want you to meet Mr. Charteris."

The girl swung around with a little gasp. Charteris bowed, waiting. Mrs. Trevor, delighted, looked on. She could have screamed when Clare bowed stiffly, thus giving Charteris, as he thought, his cue.

It was the most fascinatingly stiff and formal tea, Mrs. Trevor herself doing most of the talking. Any near reference to Clare's letter would throw that young woman into a fever of nervous suspense; a covert reminder to Charteris of their recent conversation almost brought him to his knees in an agony of apprehension. Finally, Mrs. Trevor relented.

"Children," she said, laughing, "I have punished you both, now, enough. I want you to reward me for letting you off so easily by being married here, from my house."

They rose in unconsciously concerted protest.

"Nellie!" cried the girl. "Is this the way—?"

"You promised me, Nellie!" Charteris reproached.

"Children," Mrs. Trevor said again. "Infants! Do you not know that it has been my guiding hand that has helped to make this match? I do not intend now to have the whole pudding spoiled by a poor sauce."

She rose, and swept from the room to a confused murmur of voices beyond. Charteris went up promptly to Clare, putting his arms about her.

"I told her," he said, reproachfully, "that you were the one woman I knew besides herself who could keep a secret."

"I told her that you wished it kept a dead secret. She has deceived both."

They did not hear a step behind them.

"As you both fitchly deserved."

Mrs. Trevor spoke severely. Then, at sight of their discomfiture she smiled, pointing meaningfully to the next room.

"The Bishop himself is here with book and gown. Come!"



# In The Studio

BY GEORGE GIBBS

Author of "The Bolted Door," etc

ILLUSTRATED BY THE AUTHOR

MISS MILLICENT DARROW turned into a side street and walked westward. It was not unusual for a young woman to be seen moving in the direction of the Art Gallery or carrying a catalogue of a picture show, for as every one knows it was the fashion to drop in at the Exhibition after luncheon before going on to the inevitable tea. But Miss Darrow had not been out to luncheon. When she had turned her back upon the restless tide of the Avenue and sought the quiet of its lesser tributary she was conscious of a sense of relaxation full of suggestion, import and possibility. After the three years of unremitting labor which had followed her débutante dinner-dance it was like being born again.

Miss Darrow looked down at the book she carried. As she did so she had a glimpse of the toe of her broad walking boot and the rigid lines of her skirt. As though to emphasize these symbols of her renovation, a rebellious wisp of hair slipped from above her ear and fluttered across her cheek. She brushed it back hurriedly. Was that necessary too? She saw herself in the years to come, the well groomed creature of frills and laces no longer—a female biped, a maiden aunt, a frequenter of public libraries, a patroness of Settlements, a wearer of glasses and "sensible" garments. She caught the bright flash of her smile in a broad pane of glass near by, and what she saw made her content; in the place of the maiden aunt the reassuring dimples and curves of three and twenty were making merry.

The rooms were comfortably crowded. Miss Darrow entered chastened and conscious of a certain dignity and repose in the character of her surroundings. She

brought forth her catalogue, resolutely opened it to the first page and in a moment was oblivious to the people about her. She did not belong to the great army "who know what they like." There was a swiftly reviving impulse to worship at a shrine too long neglected; she had an instinctive perception of the good, and found herself not a little amazed at the amount of masterly work by younger men whose names she had never heard. It was an unpleasant commentary upon the mentality and taste of the set in which she moved and she was conscious of a sense of guilt; for was she not a reflection of the short-comings of those she was so ready to condemn? "The Plain—Evening—William Hazelton"—a direct rendering of an upland field at dusk, between portraits by well known men; "Sylvia—Henry Marlowe"—a girl in a green bodice, painted with knowledge and assurance.

In another room were the things in a higher key—she knew them at a glance; and on the opposite wall a full-length portrait that looked like a Sargent. She was puzzled at the color, which was different from that of any man she remembered. The Sargents she knew were grouped in another room—and yet there was here the force and breadth of the master. She experienced the same perplexity—"Agatha—Philip Renshaw," said the catalogue. She sank upon a bench before it and gave herself up to quiet rapture.

"If I were a man," she said at last, "that is how I should wish to paint, the drawing of Sargent, the poetry of Whistler, the grace of Alexander, the color of Benson. Philip Renshaw—" she apostrophised. "I'm a Philistine. Forgive me."

It was very pleasant under the subdued lights from above. She followed the sweep of the drapery with delighted eye, taking an almost sensuous pleasure in the relation of color and the grace of the arms, and throat—the simplicity of the modeling and the admirable characterization.

She found herself repeating:

And those that were good shall be  
happy,  
They shall sit in a golden chair;  
They shall splash at a ten-league canvas  
With brushes of comet's hair.

"Philip Renshaw, I wonder if you're good. You ought to be. I'd be good if I could paint like that. I'd work for an age at a sitting, too. How could one ever be tired making adagios in color. Oh!" she sighed, "how good it must be to amount to something!"

A procession of agreeable, vacuous faces passed before the canvas, creatures of a common fate, garbed in the uniform of convention, carrying the polite weapons of Vanity Fair, each like the others and as uninteresting. The few who wore the bright chevrons of distinction had marched with the throng for a time, but had gone back to their own. She wondered if it would really matter if she never saw them again; of course the women—but the men—would she care?

Was there not another life? It beckoned to her. What was Renshaw like? Could he be young and handsome as well as gifted? The vacuous faces vanished and in their place she could see this young genius—Antinous and Hercules combined—standing before this canvas living for the mere joy of work. Here was her answer. Was she to flit through enchanted gardens other people had planted, sipping only at the perfumed petals while the honey to be garnered was in plain sight?

A voice broke in behind her.

"It's convincing, but I tell you, Renshaw, the arm's too long."

"Do you think so? I fancied the reverse—you see she was of the slender type. I never saw an unprofessional model hold the pose so steadily."

"Who is she?" asked the other. But the men had turned away and Renshaw's reply was lost in the murmur of the crowd. Miss Darrow turned to follow them with her eyes—what a big fellow he was! with an admirable profile, a straight nose and a chin like the one on the mask of Brutus.

"Why, Milly dear!" Mrs. Prendergast passed an incurious but observant eye over her acquaintance. "I thought you were in Aiken. What a lovely hat! Are you going to the Inghams? What will you wear? Isn't it restful here?"

Miss Darrow politely acquiesced and attempted replies, but her eyes strayed towards the Renshaw portrait.

"Stunning," continued Mrs. Prendergast. "A new man just over. Quite too clever. Wonderful color, isn't it? Like a ripe pomegranate."

"Have you met him?"

"No. He belongs to the Westchester Renshaws though. Mrs. Hopkinson! So glad. Is Frederick here?"

The agreeable lady had made of the portion of the galleries in the neighborhood of the Renshaw portrait a semblance of her own busy drawing-room. Other acquaintances came up and Miss Darrow was soon lost in the maze of small talk. A broad pair of shoulders were here thrust forward into her group and Miss Darrow found herself looking into a pair of quizzical grey eyes which were beaming a rather frank admiration into hers. "Miss Darrow—Mr. Renshaw," some one was saying; and she was conscious that in a moment the new arrival had quietly and cleverly appropriated her and was taking her to the opposite side of the room where he found for her a Winslow Homer of rocks and stormy splendor.

"Why is it," she asked, after her first enthusiasm, "that the work of the artist so seldom suggests its creator's personality?"

"The perversity of the human animal," he laughed. "That's the system of justice of the great Republic of Art, Miss Darrow. If we lose a characteristic here, we gain it somewhere else. Rather a nice balance, don't you think?"

"You hardly look the poet, Mr. Ren-

shew—you don't mind my saying so?" she laughed. "And if you do dream, you do it with your eyes very wide open."

Mr. Renshaw's brows were tangled in bewilderment. "I'm really not much given to dreaming. I'm rather busy, you know."

"It's splendid of you. You've worked long?"

"Er—yes—since I left college," he said, the tangle in his brows suddenly unraveling. A smile now illuminated his rather whimsical eyes. Miss Darrow found herself laughing frankly into them.

"Art is long—you must be at least—thirty."

"Less," he corrected. "Youth is my compensation for not being a lawyer—or a broker."

She was conscious of the personal note in their conversation, but she made no effort to avoid it. This genius of less than thirty gave every token of sanity and good-fellowship.

"Who is Agatha?" she asked suddenly.

"A very good friend of mine in Paris."

"Oh!" she said, in a sudden anguish of confusion.

"A charming person," he added hastily. "Miss Brinton—a Philadelphian—do you know her?"

"I should never have thought her an American. The face is of the East—the Slav—did you choose her for that character?"

"Not at all. She was er—just—just a sitter—a commission, you know."

"How interesting!"

They had made the rounds of the room and were now facing the portrait again.

"It was lucky to have so good a model," he continued. "One doesn't always. Have you ever posed, Miss Darrow?"

"I? No, never. Father has been trying to get me painted this winter. But I've been so busy—and then we're going South in two weeks—so we haven't been able to manage it."

"What a pity!" The subtle sparkle had died in his eyes, which from the shadow of their heavy lashes were regarding hers intently. "I saw you at the opera on Wednesday. You were in black

—do you remember? You were trying to listen to 'Madame Butterfly.' In your box everybody else was trying to talk at once. You were annoyed. There was a light just near your head and it gave your hair an aureola of flame. And then I wondered if it was possible to get it in terms of mere paint and oil—the black of the frock, the dull whiteness of the flesh and the crown of coppery gold. Do you know that for the first time in my life I really wanted to paint?"

"You're very kind to my poor mop," said Miss Darrow. "Would you really like to paint it? Suppose I said you should. I want my portrait done. If you make me half as wonderful as Agatha, I shall die happy. Wont you come in tomorrow at five? We can talk it over. I must be going now. No, not now, tomorrow. *Au revoir.*" She gave him her hand with a friendly nod, and threaded her way through the crowd, leaving Renshaw staring at the card she had left in his hand.

## II

Mr. Renshaw moved about the studio adjusting a canvas upon an easel, bringing out draperies, raising and lowering curtains, and peering into drawers and chests in a manner which betrayed an uncertain state of mind. At last he seemed to find what he was looking for—a drapery of soft gray material. This he cast over the back of the easel—walked back from it to the far side of the room where he put his head on one side and looked with half-closed eyes.

There was a clatter of the old French knocker. Mr. Renshaw dropped his paint tubes and cigarette and opened the door.

"Am I late?" laughed Miss Darrow.

"You couldn't come too early," said the man. But he dubiously eyed the French maid who had entered bearing a huge *portmanteau*.

"I was so afraid to keep you waiting. You're not very angry?"

"I'm sure I've been here since dawn," he replied.

"Then let's not waste any time. Oh, isn't it charming! Where shall I go?"

He pushed open the door of the dress-



"Will I do?" asked the girl

ing-room. "I think you'll find the mirror fair," he said. "If there's anything—"

"How exciting! No. And I'll be out in a jiffy."

When the door was closed Mr. Renshaw eyed the model-throne, the draperies, the chair and the canvas, seeking a last inspiration before the imminent

hour. He put a Japanese screen behind the chair and threw a scarlet drapery over one end of it, knocking at the rebellious folds to make them fall as he wished.

"Will I do?" asked the girl radiantly emerging. She wore a black evening dress. The maid had thrown a filmy



drapery over her which brought out the dull whiteness of the shoulders. "It is so different in the day-time," she said, coloring; "but father has always wanted it so. You know I haven't told him. It's to be a surprise."

Mr. Renshaw's color responded to hers. He bowed his head. "You are charming," he murmured gallantly with a seriousness she could not fail to notice.

When Julie was dismissed to return at luncheon-time, Mr. Renshaw conducted Miss Darrow to her throne and took his place before the canvas. She stood leaning easily upon the back of the chair, the lines of her slender figure sweeping down from the radiant head and shoulders into the dusky shadows behind her. She watched him curiously as he stood away from the easel to study the pose.

"If I only could—it's splendid so," he was murmuring, "but I wish you to sit."

She acquiesced without question. "I feel like a specimen," she sighed. "It's a terrible ordeal. I'm all arms and hands. *Must* you squint?"

In Renshaw's laugh all restraint was liberated to the winds.

"Of course. All artists squint. It's like the circular sweep of the thumb—a symbol of the craft."

He walked behind her and adjusted the screen, taking away the crimson drapery and putting a greyish green one in its place.

"There," he cried, "just as you are. It's stunning."

She was leaning forward with one elbow on the chair arm, her hands clasped, one slender wrist at her chin.

"Really! You're awfully easy to please—I wonder if I shall do just as well as Agatha."

He took up a charcoal—looked at its end, and made a slight adjustment of the easel. "Before we begin—there's one thing I forgot." He paused. "All painters are sensitive, you know. I'm rather queerer than most. I hope you won't care." The charcoal was now making rapid gyrations upon the surface of the canvas. "I'm awfully sensitive to criticism—in the early stages. I usually manage to pull out somehow—but in the beginning—when I'm drawing, laying in the figure

—I don't like my canvas seen. Sometimes it lasts even longer. You won't mind not looking, will you?"

"I see. That's what the grey thing is for. I don't mind in the least; only I hope it will come soon. I'm wild to see. And please smoke. I know you want to."

The grateful Renshaw drew forth his cigarette-case and while his model rested busied himself among his tubes of paint, squeezing the colors out upon the palette.

"If you only knew," he sighed, "how very difficult it seems." But the large brush dipped into the paint and Mr. Renshaw worked vigorously, a fine light glowing in his eyes. Miss Darrow watched the generous flow from the oil cup mingling with the colors.

"What a lot of vermilion you use."

"Hair," he replied. He seemed so absorbed that she said no more, and she didn't know whether to laugh or frown. Later she ventured:

"If it's carrotty I'll never speak to you again. Please make it auburn, Mr. Renshaw."

He only worked the more rapidly. He seemed to be dipping into every color upon the palette, in the center of which had grown a brown of the color of walnut-juice. This he was applying vigorously to the lower part of the canvas. When the palette was cleared he put it aside and sank back in a chair with a sigh.

"Rest," said the artist.

"I'm not in the least tired," she replied.

"But I am. It takes it out of me to be so interested."

"Does it?" She leaned back in her chair, regarding him with a new curiosity. "Do you know," she added, "you are full of surprises—"

She ignored the inquiry of his upraised brows.

"—and paint," she finished with a laugh.

He ruefully eyed a discolored thumb. "I'm awfully untidy, I know. I've always been. In Paris they called me Slovenly Peter."

"I shouldn't say that—only—"

"What?"

"Only—" she indicated several streaks



of black on his grey walking-suit. "Must one always pay such a price to inspiration?"

"Jove! That *was* stupid. I always do though, Miss Darrow." He examined the spots and touched them with the tips of his fingers. "It's paint," he finished, examining it with a placidity almost impersonal. "It doesn't matter in the least."

"And do you always smudge your face?" she asked sweetly. He looked at himself in the mirror. There was a broad streak of red across his forehead. He wiped it off with a handkerchief.

"Oh, please don't laugh."

He sank on the edge of the throne, and then they both laughed joyously—naturally, like two children.

"I'm an awfully lucky fellow," he said, at last. "I feel like a feudal baron with a captured princess. Here are you, that most inaccessible of persons, the Woman of Society, doomed every morning for two weeks to play Darby and Joan with a man you've known only three days. How on earth can a fellow survive seeing a girl he likes between cups of tea! It's rough, I think. Society seems to accomplish every purpose but its avowed one. Instead of which everybody plays Puss-in-the-Corner. A fellow might have a chance if the corners weren't so far apart. And I just back from Europe with all the skeins of old friendship at a loose end, walk into your circle and quietly appropriate you for a fortnight—while your other friends go a-begging."

"They haven't begged very hard," she laughed. "If they had, perhaps they might be playing Darby and Joan, too. I've never tried it before. But I think it's rather nice—" She broke off suddenly.

"Do you know, I've rested *quite* twenty minutes," she said, after a moment. "Come, time is precious."

"That depends—" She waited a moment for him to finish but he said no more.

"How extraordinary!" she said with a pretty *moué*. "I don't know whether I should be pleased or not."

"Can you blame me? The Forelock of Time hangs too temptingly," he laughed. "Of course, if you'd *rather* pose—" He took up his dripping brushes with a sigh.

"Oh, indeed, I don't care," she sank back in the chair. "Only don't you think—isn't that really what I'm here for?"

"It is time to pose, Miss Darrow," he said determinately.

But she made no move to get into the position.

"I haven't complained," and she smiled at him. "Your muse is difficult and I'm the gainer. Really, I think I'd rather talk."

"And I'm waiting to go on with the portrait."

"I'll pose again on one condition—"

"Yes."

"That you put on overalls."

The brushes and palette dropped to his side. "That's rough on Slovenly Peter," he laughed. He set about squeezing the paint tubes, wiping the brush handles and edge of the palette. When the pose was over Julie appeared. The artist drew the grey drapery over the easel and helped Miss Darrow to descend.

### III

Those mornings in the studio were full of subtleties. Miss Darrow discovered that Mr. Renshaw could talk upon many subjects. He had traveled much in Europe, and could even draw a bold outline for her of the Great West she had never seen. He talked little of art, and then only when the subject was introduced by his model. In the rests, which were long, he led Miss Darrow, often without her being aware of it, down the pleasant lanes of thought, all of which seemed to end abruptly in the garish sunshine of personality. She did not find it unpleasant; only it seemed rather surprising the way all formality between them had been banished.

One morning there was a diversion. A clatter on the knocker, and Renshaw, frowning, went to the door. Miss Darrow heard a feminine voice and an exclamation—Mr. Renshaw went out, rather hurriedly and stood outside, his hand upon the door knob. There was a murmur of conversation and a feminine laugh. She tried not to hear what was said. The hand fidgeted on the knob, but the murmur of voices continued, deep and earnest from

the man, light and bantering from the woman. Miss Darrow got down from the throne and moved to the window, adjusting a stray curl as she passed.

She looked away from the mirror, then stopped suddenly and looked again. When Mr. Renshaw entered she was sitting in the window-seat looking out over the roof tops. He was profuse in apology. She resumed the pose and the artist painted silently. "They say there's a pleasure in painting that only a painter knows," she began.

"Of course."

"Then why do we rest so often? I'm not easily deceived. The fine frenzy is lacking, Mr. Renshaw—isn't it so?"

For reply he held out his paint-smudged hands.

"No—no," she went on. "You're painting timidly with the tips of your fingers—not in the least like the 'Agatha.' I'm sure you're doing me early-Victorian."

Mr. Renshaw stopped painting, looked at his canvas, and laughed. "Oh, it's hardly that," he said.

"Wont you prove it?"

"How?"

"By letting me look." She rose from her chair, got down from the throne and took a rapid step or two towards the easel. But Renshaw's broad shoulders barred the way.

"Please," she urged.

"I can't, really."

"Why not?" She stood her ground firmly looking up into his face, but Renshaw did not move or reply.

She settled into the pose again and Renshaw went mechanically to his place before the canvas. Once it seemed as if he were about to speak—but he thought better of it. He looked down at the mass of color mingled on the palette. His brush moved slowly on the canvas. At last it stopped and dropped to his side.

"I can't go on."

She dropped out of the pose. "Are you ill?"

"Oh, no," he laughed. With the setting aside of the brushes and palette, Mr. Renshaw seemed to put away the shadow that had been hanging over his thoughts all the morning. He stood beside her and was looking frankly into her eyes. She

saw something in his that had not been there before—for she looked away—past the chimneys and apartment houses, past the clouds and into the void that was beyond the blue. She had forgotten his presence—and one of her hands which he held in both of his.

"Perhaps you understand," he said quietly. "Perhaps you know."

The fingers moved slightly, but on the brows a tiny frown was gathering. He relinquished her hand with a sigh and stood looking rather helplessly in the direction of the mute and pitiless easel. They were so deep in thought that neither of them heard the turning of a skeleton key in the latch and the opening of the door. The Japanese screen for a moment concealed them from the view of a small, serious-looking man with a straw-colored Van Dyke beard, who was gazing in open-eyed astonishment at the paint spattered easel and floor. A muttered sound came from his throat and he strode forward into their range of vision.

"Pete!" he gasped, "What on earth—"

Miss Darrow started from her chair, the crimson rushing to her cheeks, and stood drawing the lace across her shoulders.

Mr. Renshaw was cool. "Miss Darrow," he asked, "have you met my cousin? He's studying painting—and—er—sometimes uses this place. Perhaps—"

The words hung on his lips as he realized that Miss Darrow, with an inclination of the head toward the visitor, had vanished into the dressing-room.

As the door closed other words less polite came forth.

But the small man broke in: "Oh! I say, Pete, that's a bit strong. If I'd thought you were to have company here—"

Peter Renshaw's brows drew together and his large frame seemed to grow compact.

"Hush, Phil," he whispered. "You don't understand. You've made an awful mess of things. Wont you go?"

"But my dear chap—"

"Phil, I'll explain later. But go—please!"

With an outraged glance towards the easel, Mr. Philip Renshaw went out.



She settled into the pose again and Renshaw went to his place before the canvas

Peter Renshaw closed the door, shot its bolt and put his back against it. As the clatter of the high-heeled boots on the wooden stairs died away on the lower floors, he gave a sigh, folded his arms and waited.

When Miss Darrow emerged from the

dressing-room ready for the street, she found him there.

"My things are in the *portmanteau*," she said, icily. "My maid will call for them. If you will permit me—"

But Mr. Renshaw did not move. "Miss Darrow—" he began.

"Will you let me pass?"

"I can't, Miss Darrow—until you hear. I wouldn't have had it happen for anything in the world."

"I cannot listen. Wont you open the door?"

He bowed his head as though better to receive her reproaches, but he did not move.

"Oh!" she cried, "how could you!" Her chin was raised, and she glanced scornfully at him from under her narrowed lids.

"Please," he pleaded, quietly. "If you will only listen—"

She turned and walked towards the window. "Isn't it punishment enough for it all to end like this?" he went on. "Without making it seem as though I were worse than I am. Really I'm not as bad as I'm painted."

It was an unfortunate phrase. An awkward silence followed it, in which he was conscious that Miss Darrow had turned suddenly from the window and was facing the Thing upon the easel which was now revealed to them both in all its uncompromising ugliness. From the center of a myriad of streaks of paint something emerged, Something in dull tones, staring like a Gorgon from its muddy illusive-ness. To Renshaw it had been only a canvas daubed with infelicitous paint. Now from across the room it seemed to have put on a smug and scurrilous personality and odiously leered at him from its unlovely background.

"Don't," cried Renshaw. "Don't look at the thing like that."

But the girl did not move. She stood before the easel, her head a little on one side, her eyes upon the canvas.

"It's really not Victorian, is it?" she asked calmly.

"You *must* listen!" cried Renshaw, leaving his post at the door. "I insist. You know why I did this mad thing. I've told you. I'd do it again—"

"I've no doubt you will," she put in scornfully. "It doesn't seem to have been so difficult."

"It was. The hardest thing I've ever done in my life. You gave me the chance. I took it. I wont regret it. It was selfish—brutal—anything you like. But I don't

regret—Nine wonderful mornings, twenty-seven precious hours—more, I hope, than you've given any man in your life." He made one rapid stride and took her in his arms. "I love you, Millicent, dear. I've loved you from the first moment—there in the picture gallery. Yes, I'd do it again. Every moment I've blessed the luck that made it possible. Don't turn away from me. You don't hate me. I know it. You couldn't help feeling a response to a love like mine." He held her close to him, raising her head at last until her lips were level with his own. But he did not touch them. She still struggled faintly, but she would not open her eyes and look at him.

"No, no, you mustn't," was all that she found strength to say.

"You can't deny it. You do—care for me. Look up at me and tell me so."

She would not look at him and at last struggled away and stood, her cheeks flaming.

"You are masterful!" she stammered. "A girl is not to be won in this fashion."

"I love you," he said. "And you—"

"I hate you," she gasped. She turned to the mirror, and rearranged her disordered hair.

"Don't say that. Wont you forgive me?"

She sank on the model stand and buried her face in her hands. "It was cruel of you—cruel."

The sight of her distress unnerved him and gave him for the first time a new view of the enormity of his offense. It was her pride that was wounded. It was the thought of what Phil, his cousin, might think of her that had wrought the damage. He bent over her, his fingers nearly touching her, yet restrained by a delicacy and a new tenderness begotten by the thought that it was he alone who had caused her unhappiness.

"Forgive me," he whispered. "I'm sorry."

And she only repeated, "What can he think of me? What can he think?"

Renshaw straightened, a new thought coming to him. It seemed like an inspiration—a stroke of genius.

"Of course," he said, calmly, "you're hopelessly compromised. He must think



what he pleases. There's only one thing to do."

She arose and breathlessly asked, "What *can* I do? How can I—"

"Marry me—at once."

"Oh."

She spoke the word slowly—wonderingly—as if the idea had never occurred to her before. He had left the way to the door unguarded, but instead she walked toward the window, and looked out over the roof tops. To Renshaw the silence was burdened with meaning and he broke it timorously.

"Wont you—wont you, Millicent, dear?"

Her voice trembled a little when she replied: "There is one thing more important than that—than anything else in the world to me."

At her side his eyes questioned mutely.

"And that?" he asked at last.

"My reputation," she whispered.

He stood a second studying her face, for his happiness grew upon him slowly. But behind the crooked smile which was half-hidden from him, he caught the dawn of a new light that he understood. He took her in his arms then, and wondered how it was that he had not kissed her when her lips had been so close before. But the new wonder that came to them both made them willing to forget that there had ever been anything else before.

Later, Renshaw, unable to credit his good fortune and marveling at the intricacies of the-feminine mind, asked her a question. Her reply caused him more amazement:

"Poor, foolish, Slovenly Peter! I saw it by accident in the mirror a week ago."

## Coward Conscience

BY HORACE HAZELTINE

Author of "The City of Encounters," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN NEWTON HOWITT

THE dead stillness of the great house asleep tortured Dunham's vibrant nerves to pain. He wished now that he had gone to the club, as he had at first intended. He should have found some one awake there. Here there were only senseless, exaggerated echoes. Against the mute quiet, even his own quick breathing resounded. The dropping upon a chair of his sable-lined coat, luxuriously soft as it was, flung back at him a harsh note, as of protest. A moment ago a clock in some distant chamber, chiming the hour of three in the morning, had smitten his hearing with ruthless dissonance as he had let himself through by his own private door into this costly architectural monstrosity in carven marble which he called home. And the ensuing silence, accentuated, made palpable by contrast, had begun, then, to oppress and harry him. The looming shadows, too, of the

lofty, onyx-pilastered hall through which he had passed, where the wan light from a solitary, high-placed, opal-tinted medallion waged vain struggle with the devouring dark, had vexed him menacingly.

Once in his study he had lost no time in flooding it with light. But though he had thus in a measure routed the lurking shades, the monstrous stillness, weirdly enhanced by those disturbing echoes, had followed and persisted. It was a large, high room, wainscoted, elaborately frescoed. To-night, as never before, it seemed to manifest a capacity for profound and awful quiet; a quiet which an irritatingly sensitive resonance aggravated well nigh beyond bearing.

Restlessly he began pacing back and forth from the tapestry-hung doorway to the broad, curtained windows which looked out on the deserted avenue. But his tread—slight, almost frail, and ner-



vously light of foot as he was—the rich Ghiordes rug failed utterly to smother. The faint reverberance, magnified, evoked an hallucination. To Dunham it seemed as if stealthily, step by step, in concert with his stride, some one was creeping at his heels.

A-tremble with the horror of it, he abruptly ceased walking. He suddenly realized that he was very tired. A dragging lassitude was upon him. Into the luxury of the deep chair before his broad flat-top desk of tulip wood, with its elaboration of gilt Empire ornament, he sank relaxed. His lined brow and corded throat were wet with a cold perspiration. A lock of iron-gray hair clung matted against his forehead, and his dress collar had already lost a degree of its uprightness. He was pallid with a sickly, sallow pallor and his eyes were dim with the dimness of clouded agate.

For a little he sat very still; the grim, unrippled silence wrapping him as with a stifling, deadly vapor. Meanwhile the familiar objects about him lost outline, merged, and vanished into a limitless misty, blank background against which figures presently sprang into being, formed groups and enacted scenes.

And the scenes were not pleasant. In each of them Dunham saw himself, shorn of all masking. He saw what had been; he saw what was yet to come. And as the prophecy expanded, as the rebuke dug deeper and deeper into the carapace of his conscience, he resolutely, with desperate, depleting effort, rallied his will.

Miserable mockery of the great man the world up to now had fancied him, he emerged from the thralldom of his meditation, a mere wraith of quailing, quivering terror. With shaking hand he drew out a drawer of his desk, and with uncertain, palsied fingers groped for and found the cold, shining thing that should give him release. And when he had laid it, with an air more of cherishing tenderness than of repulsion or horror, on the desk top, he leaned forward, and after snapping on the light of the over-hanging electric, chose at random a pen and began, hurriedly, to put words upon paper.

But in the midst of his writing he was interrupted. A sound reached him, no

greater than might have been made by a falling feather, but in the tensity of his nervous strain, it startled him almost to panic. His pen stroke gashed the paper, and he turned quickly, his breath bated, his heart pausing.

Beneath the great canopied electrolier which depended from the ceiling's center, full in the flood of its rays, illuminated like a stage star under the lime light, stood a man of imposing stature and dignified demeanor. He seemed neither young nor old, but rather at life's apex; and so perfect was his evening garb, yet so inconspicuous, that Dunham, in his first startled appraisal, hesitated as to his place. Whether visitor or servitor he was not sure; and the exclamation of surprise which broke from him bore in its inflection the savor of a question:

"What the—"

"I—I surprised you, sir."

The fellow's response ranged him. To Dunham it was a distinct relief.

"I see, I see," he said, his poise already partially recovered. "You're the new butler."

The man bowed, a little stiffly, a little naughtily for one in his position.

"I came this evening."

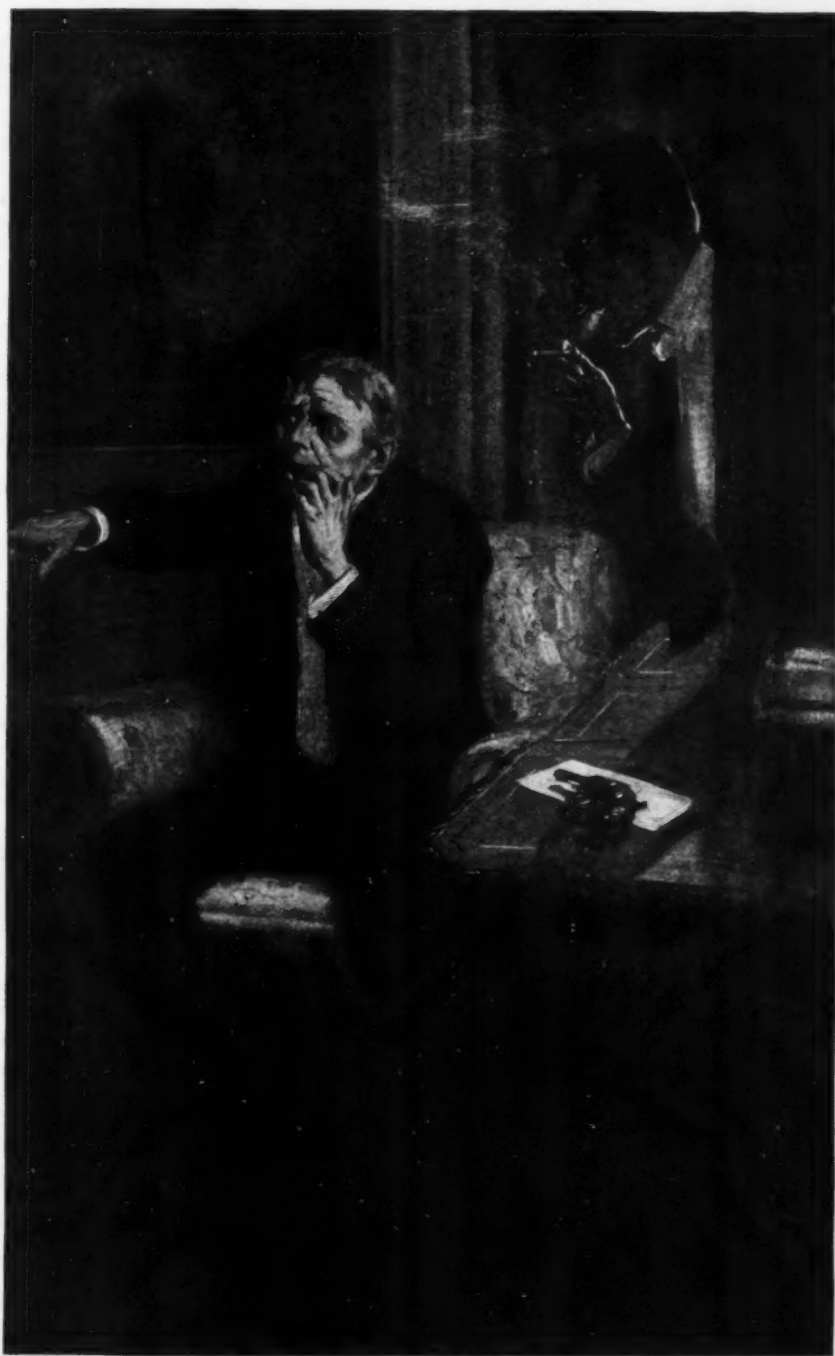
Dunham frowned. He did not like that omission of the "sir." From his office boys to his private secretary he demanded, unfailingly, this signal of respect. Should the omission be repeated the new butler would have to go. And then it suddenly occurred to him that in a little while, a very little while, he would no longer have need of butlers, respectful or otherwise. The fellow's presence was only delaying him.

"Yes, yes," he muttered, irritably. "I fancied all the servants were abed. It is after three. I shall not need you."

There was something very like a latent smile about the corners of the new butler's clean-shaven lips. The millionaire read in it a hint of cynicism.

"Are you quite sure, sir?" came the question. "There have been times, you know—" The sentence trailed and the smile was born. It was more suggestive than cynical.

Dunham's regard became searching.



"Stop! I saw them both—both of them—there, across the room"

"There have been times?" he repeated, perplexed. And he rose from his chair. "You mean, that you have been in my service before?" He stood with one hand resting on the desk top; his eyes fixed in scrutiny on the other's face. He had been impressed from the first that he had seen this man before, somewhere. There was that in his features which recalled, indeed, something of himself in his youth.

The answer to his question was delayed a little. The butler lifted his chin and slightly tossed his head. The last vestige of obsequiousness dropped from his manner.

"No," he returned, jauntily. "I should say not. The situation was reversed. The boot was on the other leg. I was not in your service; you were in mine."

Dunham was less amazed than might be imagined; the fact being that he had been gifted, it seemed, strangely enough, with a foreknowledge of this precise reply.

"I certainly remember your face," he commented, taking a step forward. "It is, indeed, quite familiar; and yet I do not recall—"

"Those who do us injuries, we remember. Those who do us favors, we forget. It was I, Mr. Dunham, who set your feet on the road to fortune."

But the millionaire protested.

"That is quite ridiculous," he said, with a smile. It was odd how this conversation with the new butler interested him. His nerves had begun to lose their tension with the cessation of the silence and the echoes. "It is, in fact, impossible. I was little more than a lad when I earned my first thousand dollars."

"You will pardon me if I recall the instance," rejoined the other with sudden politeness. "You were private secretary, at the time, to the then reigning Napoleon of Finance. You were very closely in his confidence; and you were"—he bowed, quite deferentially—"prevailed upon to dispose of certain of his secrets."

The millionaire's brow contracted with indignant anger. His thin hands doubled into fists.

"How dare you!" he cried, his voice high.

"I dare," was the answer, coolly spoken, "because it was I who prevailed upon you. 'Make your own mark, while it is easy,' I told you, 'lest you be an easy mark for some one cleverer.'"

"But, my good man," Dunham returned in astonishment, "that was forty years ago. You are scarcely that old."

The butler's face was serious. All at once there encompassed him an austere and arrogant stateliness. He was aloof and over-towering.

"I am as old as Heaven," he said, with chill impressiveness. "I am as young as to-day."

But, upon Dunham, most material of men, the manner and the words alike made scant impression. Certainly they in no wise checked his argument.

"Besides," he continued, "I remember quite well the gentleman with whom I negotiated. His name was Robinson. He was a man of fair complexion, and he wore a beard."

"Exactly." The butler had resumed the millionaire's level. "You rather balked at first. You had some foolish, old-fashioned ideas about its being dishonorable. You had about made up your mind to send Robinson about his business. It was then that I stepped in. I showed you what the lift would mean to you. Only fools and failures refuse to sell their experience for more than they pay for it. I told you that. I pictured a future for you. And then you began to be reasonable. Oh, yes, it was I, Dunham, who won you over."

The master backed towards his desk. After all, there was something in this. He recalled that he had taken exactly this view. And yet he could not remember that any one had urged him. Besides, this man must be wonderfully preserved to have been more than a child at that period. It was the echo of those words, coming back to him—"As old as Heaven; as young as to-day"—that caused him now, a little fearfully, to retreat.

"We—we have met since then?" he stammered.

"Oh, dear me, yes," returned the other, nonchalantly. "Quite frequently. We have been very close. In fact we have

often ridden together on a Broadway car." But the millionaire was not in humor for the witticism. He rather resented it, as his expression showed.

"It's most ungracious of you not to remember," the speaker continued.

To Dunham's horrified amazement the butler now took from his waistcoat pocket a gold cigarette case and after leisurely selecting a cigarette, began lightly to pound its end on the metal of the closed case.

"But—I say," the millionaire began, in protesting tone, "this wont do, you know, my man. Whatever you have been in the past, you are now my—" But the word was lost in the scraping of a match and the hissing flare of the flame.

"Not at all, not at all," returned the other, as he drew his first puff; and then he paused a second to inhale deeply. There was a couch almost directly behind him, and as he exhaled copiously the pale gray smoke, he sat down. "You may excuse my presence here," he went on, a little affectedly, "on the ground that I am your butler, but that really, you know, old chap, is merely a pretext—the butler assumption, I mean. As a matter of fact, Dunham, I'm your creditor—a very heavy creditor, if you care to know it—and I'm here to collect."

"Then you are not without company," Dunham said, sitting down too, and laughing somewhat grimly. "I have more creditors than dollars. I am a ruined man. I am bankrupt."

"Having failed to give the devil his due, there is the devil to pay," observed the creditor. But again the millionaire chose to ignore the attempt at humor. Nevertheless it annoyed him.

"I have but just come," he said, "from a meeting of my creditors. We were in session for over six hours. You should have been represented there. As it is, I resent this intrusion. My lawyers are the—"

With unlooked for precipitancy the other man sprang to his feet, his visage suddenly stern to obduracy. Dramatically he pointed an inculpatory forefinger; dramatically he cried:

"Within that wall of flesh there is a

soul counts me its creditor!" And Dunham, unstrung once more, shrank back quivering in his chair.

"The man is mad!" he muttered.

But at the next breath the mood of the versatile visitor reverted once again. He laughed, not unpleasantly.

"And still I am not recognized!" he mused.

He stood now quite close to the tulip wood desk, and his eye fell upon the written page, the conclusion of which he had interrupted.

"Ah!" he murmured. "So you were really bearing me in mind all the while! Already you had begun to prepare to cancel your indebtedness to me."

The one-time millionaire snatched the paper from under his gaze; but the visitor, smiling tolerantly, indicated with a wave of his hand the revolver glittering coldly there in the rays of the electrics.

"Is it," he asked coolly, "that you have nothing left to live for, or nothing left to live on?"

"I made a good fight, and I failed," said Dunham, with bitter resignation.

"Sinclair made a good fight and succeeded," said the other. "That's better."

"Sinclair!"

"Surely. You thought to ruin him. You brought him to your house; pretended to be his friend; advised him as to his speculations; presented him to your wife; and—"

"He, too, has lost everything. We are in the same boat," declared the ruined man.

"He has won everything. He coppered your tips. It is he who has brought you to this." And again he waved a slender, well-kept hand toward the shining weapon.

But Dunham was still incredulous.

"No, no. You are mistaken," he said, a trifle irritably. "Why, he dined with us here last evening. He went with Mrs. Dunham to the Opera. He was even more anxious than I about a certain pool in which—"

"He has cleaned up a lot of the filthy," jocosely interrupted the other for conclusion.

"He trusted me implicitly," averred the friend.



"And you would have betrayed him basely," accused the visitor.

"All is fair—" began Dunham.

"In high finance? Yes," was the retort. "You trusted him. too."

"I?"

"With your wife."

"Oh, no. I trusted Helen—I trusted Mrs. Dunham."

"And if they should both betray you?"

The dull eyes of the little man in the chair flashed suddenly bright with anger. His thin right hand leaped for the revolver.

"By Heavens!" he cried. "That is too much! Another word—and—"

But the creature at his elbow smiled sinisterly.

"This is an unconscionable hour for them to be returning from the Opera," he said quietly.

"My wife has been in bed for hours," declared Dunham, emphatically.

But the visitor raised a finger.

"Listen!" he commanded, in a quick whisper.

For the elder man there was no mistaking the echo which now reached him. A door had been opened—his own private door from the side street, through which he himself had entered.

"Mrs. Dunham and Mr. Sinclair." The fellow breathed the names at his ear.

Agitatedly he rose, yet very softly, his brain a ferment of suspicion.

"Shall we step behind the curtains—together?" suggested his companion cunningly, as he reached forward to extinguish the desk lamp.

Dunham merely nodded. The light died, and the curtains enfolded the pair of watchers. They stood very close, their shoulders touching. Together they saw the tapestry which draped the entrance from the hall swept aside; together they saw the woman advance swiftly, yet with uncertain, unsteady step—the tall, slender, regal woman of rare beauty that bore Dunham's name. Her cheeks were flaming, her eyes a-kinde, her sunny hair unkempt. From her cream-white shoulders her cloak of snowy fur had slipped until it dragged behind her. Obviously she was frightened, nervously wrought, excited. She gripped a chair-back for a

second's support; then staggered to the pillow-piled couch and sank shuddering upon it.

Amazed, torn with jealousy, which like a demon possessed him, her husband for an instant shut his eyes to the spectacle. It was for an instant only, but when again he looked forth it was to see his odd visitor had deserted his side and now stood in the room's center, with arms at side like a well-trained servant, awaiting his mistress' pleasure.

Then he heard his wife shriek, as surprised, she suddenly beheld the statue-like figure.

But in a heart-beat she realized.

"Oh, it's only you," she said.

"Yes, madam. I am sorry I alarmed you. Is there anything—"

"Yes, yes," she interrupted excitedly.

"Go at once, quickly, quickly. Make sure the side door is closed—Mr. Dunham's door—I fear I—"

"I presume it is Mr. Sinclair in the hall, madam?" queried the pretending servant, with a cant of his head, as if listening.

At this her face blanched and she rose quickly, in fresh access of alarm, her cloak dropping to the floor.

"No, no," she cried, with terror in her voice. "I will not see him. You must—"

"Possibly," the fellow interrupted with contrasting calm. "Possibly it is your husband."

"No, no," she cried again. "Nor him. Do not let him come here! Make some excuse. I cannot—I will not." She threw her hands against him. "Make haste!" she urged, pushing him. "Oh, God! Make haste!"

Dunham, with checked breath, with tumultuous heart, saw him leave her, saw him pass hurriedly out of the room; and saw her standing, trepid—her gloved hands tensely locked, her strained gaze fixed upon the tapestry hangings which had fallen together behind him. And then he saw her start and turn, with a little cry of dismay, and fling herself into the couch's farthest corner, with back turned, and her heaving bosom pressed hard against the upholstery. For through the draped doorway Sinclair had come: that young, handsome fel-





A child lay sleeping in the couch corner

low, Sinclair—bearing, as he always bore, that indomitable air of mastery.

He heard him speak, his voice low and mellow with commanded repression.

"Helen! How good of you!"

She turned about, weakly, and the words she flung at him were without force, lacking the emphasis of deep feeling.

"No, no!" she said, "I will not speak to you. You must go. I sent the butler to tell you."

"But the door," he returned. "You left it unfastened. I—"

He dropped to the couch beside her. "Why struggle so against happiness?" he asked her, as she drew away from him. "There is nothing in the world I can't give you. I have millions to-night, where a month ago I had but thousands. They are all for you, dearest." His hand touched her arm, but she shook it off.

"Stop," she said half-heartedly. "I will not listen. I—"

"You are thinking of him, I suppose," he interrupted, smiling. "But why? His race is run, Helen. He has finished. He is ruined. They'll take his last penny. Even his good name is gone. He is—"

It was then that from his place of hiding in the embrasure of the window Dunham sprang into view, a red mist swimming before his eyes. The revolver lay at his hand, and instinctively he snatched it up. The woman screamed and covered her face with her hands; Sinclair bounded to his feet.

For one long, interminable moment the two men faced each other, ungovernable hatred in the gaze of each. It was a battle of souls, and for a little, Sinclair, unarmed save by power of will, held the advantage. The hand of the elder man which gripped the weapon of glinting steel had dropped.

"My friend!" There was in the utterance a world of withering irony.

"Whom you tried to ruin," Sinclair gave back—hoarsely, defiantly.

"Whom I mean to kill," flashed the retort, and the revolver rose to the level.

At the instant a wild laugh rang out from the room's end. The stranger had returned unobserved. Dunham, distracted, turned his head. Sinclair too,

disconcerted, stood inert. Mrs. Dunham, with a little cry, crumpled fainting upon the couch pillows. From Dunham's nerveless fingers the revolver slipped with a dull clatter to the floor.

"You owe your life to me, sir." It was the visitor addressing Sinclair. He had come forward, wedging between the other two. "And now," he added, "will you put me to the trouble of showing you the door?" He spoke with dignity; his tone was peremptory.

Dunham regarded him dazedly. All at once it seemed to him that the scene was unreal, that he was taking part in a phantasmagoria. Sinclair was moving nebulously away. Helen lay, like a pale shadow, very still in the corner of the couch. This strange man—butler, creditor, mentor, what not?—alone seemed real.

"Why add murder to your score?" he was saying, as he recovered the revolver from where it lay on the rug.

Dunham made no answer. His duty was to the shadow in the couch corner. He took a step forward, but his companion intercepted him.

"Don't disturb her," he commanded. "She's quite comfortable. I've thrown her cloak over her."

Dunham saw then that what he had fancied a shadow was really the sweep of ermine cloak. But he resented the fellow's presumption, his familiarity, his assurance.

"By Heaven!" he cried, with rising spirit of revolt. "By what right do you dictate? Who and what are you?"

The other raised a commanding arm and Dunham staggered back.

"By the right of sovereignty," he answered with grim impressiveness. "I am the Son of Mystery. I have many names and many guises. My realm is the world. My dwelling is the heart of man."

The quondam millionaire shuddered as from a blow, yet he was not vanquished. He leant against his desk for support and gave repulse.

"You are most unpleasant company," he declared, "and most unwelcome. I should esteem it a favor if you would leave me."

The other stepped closer.

"I shall never leave you," he said, sternly.

But Dunham, squirming, battled fiercely.

"You defy me?" he shrieked, his face chalky, his dim eyes wide with a desperate terror. "We'll see. I'll stand your insolence no longer. I'll call my servants. I'll call the police."

Again the strange creature, towering, raised his arm and pointed his finger. His voice was thunderous.

"You will sit down," he cried, "and listen!"

And as into the chair before the desk Dunham sank broken, quivering, the manner of the other changed once more abruptly. He became again the easy, careless, light-mannered man of the world. He smiled indulgently, lighted a fresh cigarette, and resting a leg across the corner of the desk, swung his foot rhythmically.

"What a poor memory yours has been of late, Dunham," he observed, chidingly. "Can you blame me for having grown jealous of your dalliance with my enemies? On Sunday last, in the church vestibule, you dipped your hand in holy water and would have crossed yourself but for my promptness in thrusting before your old eyes a budding maid, all tender curves. It was quite a shock to me, really. You seem, foolishly, to have fancied that by paying pew rent you might secure a reserved seat for the next world's angel concert."

He surveyed the fresco above the mantel. It was a copy of Fra Angelico's "Coronation of the Virgin amid the Heavenly Choir."

"And here, in this room," he went on, "look at your frescoes! Your taste has gone off wretchedly. I remember very well the sort of pictures you had in your bachelor apartment, Dunham. Then you didn't try to sail under false water-colors. Angels!" he sneered. "Do you happen to remember Angie? You used to call her your Angel, if I recollect. Was it in the Park lake she drowned herself? And Doris! Poor, little Doris! She was such a sweet, sensitive girl. I have often wondered why anyone should choose carbolic acid as a means of release. It dis-

figured her pretty mouth so horribly."

Dunham covered his face with his hands. Each smoothly spoken word had been like a lash cutting to the quick. Now he cried out:

"Stop! For God's sake, stop! I saw them then—both of them, there across the room."

But his accuser, ignoring the plea, continued quietly to prod and prick with his trenchant reminders.

"You've been a successful man, Dunham. A very successful man. Everything you wanted came your way from the day you sold your first employer's business secrets. I saw to it that your deals should be profitable. I liked the way you rode over better men. Right or wrong never bothered you, so long as the money flowed in. Whatever you coveted you took. For you, it was just reach out and grasp. I didn't wonder at your coveting Graham's wife. What a splendid creature she was! And how cleverly you closed Graham's eyes to what was going on! Do you know, Dunham, that he was the best friend you ever had! But he was so simple; so innocent. He really thought you were an honest man, the poor fool. He would have given his life to save you pain."

Dunham sprang to his feet. His eyes, wild and staring, were bent across the table.

"Silence!" he shrieked. "Be still, I say. Oh, God! He's there! There now!"

"He died in the gutter, if I remember," the speaker persisted. "Wife and fortune both gone, he took to drink. Or was it drugs?"

"For the love of Heaven!" Dunham pleaded.

But the other laughed quietly.

"You have been mending your ways in little things, of late, I observe. But it won't do, Dunham; it won't do. You married a good woman with an idea that somehow she would be able to lift you into Paradise at the end of her train. Instead of that, you have dragged her down—"

The haggard, wretched creature, tortured now to violence, leapt forward.

"You lie!" he screamed. "You lie! She is true. Her soul is white and pure."

His tormentor stepped aside with a

mocking chuckle and Dunham advanced quickly towards the couch. But abruptly he paused, confused. What he had all along fancied was his wife's opera cloak was not an opera cloak at all. It was only two of the great, shining, satin-covered pillows with which the couch was furnished. The discovery amazed him. It seemed impossible that he could have been so mistaken, and still half incredulous he drew nearer, and reaching out, grasped one of the pillows and lifted it. A chubby, sunny-haired child lay sleeping in the couch corner.

The disclosure produced in Dunham a complete emotional revulsion. For a second he stood very still looking down, and as he looked his hard face softened—the lines of passion smoothing themselves out, made way for a great tenderness. The change was wonderful. It was almost like the working of a miracle. The lifted pillow slipping from his relaxed fingers to the floor, he bent forward, his lips parted in a fond smile, his thin cheeks moist below his lashes.

The little fellow snuggling there amongst the soft cushions was smiling too, in his dreams. His cherub cheeks were warm with color; his nestling ringlets were brighter than all of Dunham's lamented gold, and his tiny doubled fists were as soft and delicately pink as the pale coral of his little silken pajamas.

Another moment and Dunham had snatched him up and was hugging him ravenously to his breast. And as the child's eyes opened in sleepy surprise the father turned with him, held there before him, as it were, betwixt himself and the world at once a breastplate and buckler—aye, a guerdon, as well—turned in brave defiance of that strangely perplexing and vexing creature who had bared his soul and flayed it.

But to his fresh amazement the room held now no occupant save the child and himself.

For a minute or more there was silence, deep and absolute, except for the little one's soft breathing. Then, from far away, came hurrying footsteps descend-

ing marble stairs. Just a little, and these sounds were mingled with others. Voices in whisper punctuated the night quiet. The hush became animate with alarm. The whispers swelled to excited murmurs. The footsteps advanced and retreated. And then, all at once, it seemed to Dunham, the lighted study became peopled with invading, white-faced, frightened servants—footmen and maids fresh from their beds, in various stages of undress, and all with hair in disarray, who at the discovery of the master with his son in his arms, were crowding back once more towards the doorway.

Only a gray-haired, elderly woman in a gray dressing-gown held her ground, pausing midway across the floor in sudden glad recognition of Dunham's burden.

"Ah!" she cried, happily reassured. "It is here he is, the little rascal that all the household's been in search of." And then, in explanation, catching the master's questioning glance: "I have been with his mother, sir, these last four hours. She returned early from the opera ill, sir, and has only just fallen asleep. When I went back to the nursery it was to find the wee one gone, and so I woke the house to hunt for him. What, sir," she concluded, "could have possessed the child to come down here, do you suppose?"

Dunham delayed his response for a moment, while his eyes roved to the tulip-wood desk; to the sheet of paper with its unfinished writing; to that grim, shining weapon which lay close beside it, and at sight of which a tremor of chill abhorrence convulsed him; he reviewed meanwhile, as one reviews a dream, the crowding incidents of the past hour.

At length his eyes came back to the face of the child in his arms, as to a refuge.

"I think, nurse," he murmured, fearful lest he wake again the little one, "it must have been the spirit of the good Lord that possessed him; for I have had sore need of him—here—to-night."



# The Heroine of the Play

BY STANLEY OLMSTEAD

ILLUSTRATED BY H. M. BRETT

TUPTON, successful playwright, was warming his feet before his gas logs. He had never owned his own gas logs before. They therefore had a poetry and suggestiveness, an almost Yule-tide flavor, now that it was early December. With a sort of inhibited thrill he looked about on his Daghestan and Bokhara; on his bookshelves, for the building of which all around nearly all the rooms of his flat, he had received an especial permit from the apartment proprietor. These things filled his soul with deep gulps of the ozone toward which he had striven, and for the long withholding of which he had more than once contracted a sort of psychical asphyxia. He was glad he had always rallied from such attacks. If the Fittest must survive, following Darwin—why they, though the Fittest, had a precious close shave sometimes.

And here obtruded the thought of the One. The thought of the One was in some wise very novel indeed. He was by no means sure he had a right to it. Therefore he fondled it over his gas fire-side, like a child with a forbidden sweet, not daring to taste for the flavor of hope. Not even would he let himself be certain the One had really appeared at last. He only knew that she made up—in sheer loveliness she atoned for weary years in which he had believed her non-existent. Still inaccessible, still indefinite, she compensated somehow, floating before his mind's eye to-night, in this pungent blue flicker, with the sleet ticking at his window.

Gabriel, more familiarly "Gabe," his man-servant, appeared in the doorway.

"Beggin' yer pardon sir, there's a party as wants ye on the 'phone, sir."

"Gabriel," said Tupton, "You were employed in the days of our poverty, to

cook questionable bacon, and toast biscuits over fortuitous oil lamps. You have since been elevated to undreamed of glory. You have become Grand Councillor of the Laundry List, Deputy of the Trousers Creased and Sponged and Muzzler in Chief to the telephone. In the first two capacities you've given me no ground for complaint. In the third—I'm sorry to say—you're not living to the part."

Gabriel gave apologetic heed. "But it's a man, sir," he explained, "and 'e sounds as if 'e might—I means, sir, he don't sy much like generally them lydy actresses, sir, but what he do sy 'ave intelligence of sound—beggin' your pardon, sir! Shall I shut 'im off?"

"As a reader of human nature, Gabriel," remarked Tupton, as he reluctantly arose from his easy chair, "I've never found you lacking. You are the man, if I remember rightly, who defined Brescio, the great Manager, as something in the line of a dope dago, with musical hair—wasn't that it?—that day he called to become my collaborator on a play I'd worked at for three hungry years."

"You've forgotten, sir," prompted Gabe. "Them's your own h'ideas, sir. I just sized 'im up as bein' a gent who kept wide awyke when 'e slept, sir, and saw cleanest, when he didn't look stryt—beggin' your pardon, sir."

"Ah, yes. Now I remember; he was a dreamer who was never caught napping—to adapt my own way of doing your manner."

"Shall I shut 'im off, sir?"

The playwright hastened to the telephone:

"Don't know the name."

"Knew my great Aunt in Colkville



—Oh, well, that's different. I was fond of my great Aunt on ginger bread Saturdays, God rest her soul."

"About a play? You shouldn't have, old man. Everybody does a play nowadays. Imitation is annihilation, and—what's that?"

"Now, now—if you take anything I say seriously I'll make you come over and tell me all about the Colkville Cemetery and the family lot. You see some of us have outlived it, on down through the Potter's Field, barring accidents and hospitals and—what's that?"

"Oh, do it now, of course. About a half hour? Good. Glad to see you."

The playwright re-hung the receiver.

"I think he'll be all right, even if he is in wrong," he reassured Gabe. "More-over his voice sounded frozen. Fix a toddy."

With precision, the shudder of the electric bell marked off the appointed time. Gabe was arranging various phases of savory cheer in the one room void of bookshelves. Tupton himself answered the summons.

There stood before him a stocky lad of possibly five and twenty birthdays. He wore a scarlet sweater. He handled his mittenless fingers tentatively. Where he was not preternaturally red, he was abnormally blue, being both chapped and glowing.

"Mr. Wade Syler!—got it right, didn't I?" Tupton held forth a hearty grip. "Glad to see you."

Young Syler grew ruddier. The margins of blue retreated to their furthestmost habitat in ears and finger tips.

"I hardly expected," he began; and his uncertainty was not quite embarrassment. "That is to say—this is all surely good of you, Mr. Tupton!"

"Oh, nothing like that!" Tupton led the way inside: "Though I've been feeling good anyway, and Colkville folk in New York are angel's visits. Take that Morris. Have a cigar."

Syler was turning down his coat collar, the same being much puckered with the moisture of melted sleet. "Take it off," directed Tupton; "Now you make me think of our old C. H. S. Eleven—fif-

teen—or is it eighteen years back? You almost make one sentimental. Full-back?"

"Only left tackle," deprecated the young man. "My job was the Crew. But I haven't done either for six years. *The Colkville Sentinel's* kept me too busy."

"Journalist! Of course!" Tupton nodded. "Invariably!" He rambled on to the gas flame: "Out of the ashes of the reporter's enthusiasm, worked overtime, there arises a Phoenix with a modern drama in its claws. And it's generally a pretty singed bird. Of course I only speak for myself."

Syler had proven an ability to fit the cigar and the Morris chair, thus putting the odds in his favor, as against trousers frayed at the ends, and shoes with an aspect of enduring patience. Also, Tupton chose to believe his blue eyes a trifle wistful, an impression he had to absorb rather than verify. There seemed, you see, something offensive in that deliberate sizing up to which, as host, he had the right. It was Tupton's theory that when you wanted to study a man, you had already rejected him.

"Of course," he continued as they smoked on together. "You want to talk of the play you've written and I want you to. But—the more I think of that name of yours—'Wade Syler'—the more vivid it seems to sound. I associate it in some strange way, with a beautiful young woman, whom I once worshipped, hoping she might wait. She didn't wait—I needn't add. Now did my Aunt Euphemia, or any of the older ones, ever happen to mention a certain very pretty girl who taught in the graded school, and became legendary by the simple act of marrying that name and going away?"

"She was my mother!"

"And my teacher! Ah, yes, I remember now. Dear me—the contracting circles of things! You, then, are Wade Syler, the second. That's where the name haunted."

"I was sent back to Colkville friends who offered to take me," explained the guest. "Both my parents died when I was a little shaver."

Tupton's man had already brought the toddy from which, in obedience to order, young Syler took occasional hot gulps.



"A big mistake!" broke in Tupton

"To think of it, to think of it," revealed Tupton: "Miss Cordy's son. My boy, you're an Avatar of childhood's ideal—the thing a man never outlives, no matter how much he lives it down. Miss Cordy was my teacher, I think in the sixth grade. And though I'm not, as a rule, enthusiastic over rival dramatists, I simply can't tell you how glad I am you were foolish enough to come to New York."

The young man flushed slightly. "I've not been very successful so far, but it was up to me to come," he said. "You see I once entered into a sort of compact to *make* New York—just as I once made the

crew—I was Stroke, on that, you know. She," he stammered, "I mean—the other party of the compact, made her New York all right, sometime since. As for me, you'll understand, how my existence is temporarily erased, while I—." He stopped, being at a progressive total loss.

"You mean the other party isn't kept posted," Tupton signified perfect understanding. "Of course, only prosperity cares to be confidential. But don't keep her *too* long in suspense, old man. It isn't good for them."

Of that phase, young Syler was plainly shy. Gabe eased matters, announcing a hot chafing-dish ready and waiting. The

two entered the bookless chamber, which served as dining-room with a pantry for kitchen.

"You've brought along your scenario?" said Tupton.

"And my play, too," eagerly spoke the other. "Both have been four weeks in the office of Mr. Brescio. I secured them to-day."

"Everything copyrighted?"

Syler hesitated again. "I'm not afraid of piracy. And then, you see, a copyright means two extra carbon copies, and type-writing appears to be expensive in New York. I'm sure it isn't yet necessary."

"A big mistake," broke in Tupton. "That is, if you're going to leave your stuff around managers' offices. Of course I don't know how good it is or isn't. But I do know, though I hate to admit it, that the same man who thinks a thing too bad to buy, may sometimes find it good enough to steal from. Of course, I've no instance in mind, and it's probably rare, but—do have some more sherry-chicken!"

They had fallen on the chafing-dish. In the example of his host, who impartially served voracious platefuls, Syler was not embarrassed before his own remarkably keen appetite. Fortunately there was enough and to spare.

"Gabe is the Pearl of Great Price," explained Tupton, when they had returned to the sitting-room, leaving that person with the surplusage. "Discovered him in a London lodging house. When I've had little he has cost me less. Also he has stuck. Americans don't. Let's see your scenario."

Syler produced it, and the play, from under his sweater.

"By the way what did Brescio or Brescio's secretary have to say about them?"

"Not much—though he did send for me one day after a two hours' wait in his outer vestibule and wanted my address. He wanted the one thing I couldn't—"

"I see," nodded Tupton. "There was no one Park bench to which you cared permanently to refer him."

Above the scarlet sweater, responsive eyes twinkled.

"Ah, yes," Tupton went on. "I know. On the other side we call it the Hotel de la Belle Etoile—very prettily."

The last two words came from a profound abstraction. Tupton had plunged into the scenario.

"See here, old man," he presently said. "Where did you get this scheme; I might say, more explicitly, the dedicatory idea—the germinal note?"

He spoke without looking up from his reading.

"In Colkville," promptly responded the younger playwright. "You see some of it happened in just that way a few years ago. There was the same old man who came up to Western New York, from somewhere near New Orleans and brought his granddaughter, and built the Southern mansion, with the pillars and everything, a half-hour's drive from town. He was an odd old fellow, very gifted and artistic. When he died, three years ago, the granddaughter permitted me to make an extra two-column story about it all, for the *Sentinel*—not mentioning names."

The young man arose to fish in an inside pocket of the coat he had taken off. "I've always carried the clipping with me," he said, and presented a folded slip of printing, ready to fall apart at its creases. "You see it rather especially featured *her*, and she was—a very unusual girl."

"With what admirable restraint he puts it," thought Tupton. "She is of course the One—his One. He's a lucky Unfortunate. He's found his One, years and years earlier than many of us."

What Tupton said aloud, however, was of vastly different character, and bore reference to the neglected copyright. "You must do it, old man. You must do it at once," he insisted. "Why that title alone is worth opening a safe for, and it's all the more endangered because you once used it to head your newspaper story."

Young Syler made no reply; Tupton perceived his dilemma:

"Of course! You are thinking of those necessary extra carbon copies. But why can't you make them yourself?"

"I can plunk at a typewriter, surely," the other hesitated; "but just now—"

"Naturally!" broke in Tupton. "There are poor typist's accommodations at the

Hotel de la Belle Etoile. But my boy, there's lots of work of my own I've got to get done, and I was musing on the business of a permanent assistant just before you 'phoned. In lieu of that, you can be my temporary secretary and make copies of your own play, in moments of leisure—when you're not doing the little work somebody's got to do for me."

Syler grasped his hand. "It may be you're fixing all this up to order for me," he said. "But if it *is* charity you make it easy to overlook it. Show me your typewriter and bring out some of your work. I'll get busy right now."

"There's no tearing hurry. Still, if you'll feel any better—" Here Tupton interrupted himself. "Gabe," he called, "roll in that typewriter desk. We're going to get busy."

"And now," he announced, "as I haven't anything for this particularly prompt moment, suppose you start getting your copies of 'Snowbound Dixie' ready for your copyright at Washington. And if you'll be so good as to excuse me for awhile I've got to go right out and look up Brescio."

"The Brescio?"

"The same. There is but one. I've got to see *the* Brescio about a play on which he requested my collaboration, some three and a half weeks ago, and for which he himself supplied title and scenario."

"Any of it ready?" Syler was eager. "I might begin to work on it."

"Three acts are finished and in the safe; we don't take three years any more." (Syler missed the allusion.) "But we're not quite primed to have them typed—not yet."

The successful playwright was already in the hallway, hatted and overcoated. "We've much editing on our hands," he called back, by way of farewell.

Amid prompt and energetic clicks, the unsuccessful playwright wished his new friend good luck as the outer door slammed behind him.

At Brescio's Number-Two Theatre, the playwright ran bolt upon Miss Beatrice Desmond in the wings. She was com-

ing off from her scene in the second act of a melodrama in which Brescio had daringly featured her, preliminary to a still bolder intention of turning her into a Star next season. In this plan he had been more than encouraged by Tupton, who was helping produce her play, having indeed, written three acts of it already.

The secret must out; if Tupton had one belief in the world, it centered in Miss Desmond. "It's just her Southern naturalness—her cleanly charm. For all her inexperience, she is entirely convincing and—different!" he would reiterate, as if in extenuation to the producing manager. The producing manager agreed: There were the box-office receipts; there was the press-office attitude! For Tupton, such clinchers counted nothing. His opinion of Miss Desmond would have survived an unimaginably empty house, or inconceivable hisses. Far down in his soul there waxed apace that little ray he dared not formulate. Domestic happiness had not been created for his sort: he had acquiesced in the habit of realizing that. Never had he claimed a sweetheart since misty, mystic days when Miss Cordelia Layton used to permit his escort home from the school—a privilege she had rather neutralized by frank reference to him, in his own presence, as her "little beau."

Now, however—but it still seemed wiser to throttle any definite feeling. Moreover, in Miss Desmond's presence such hope dazzled him, practically stifled him, made of him always an inert thing, until he focussed his will and crushed it. In that sort of control he had attained considerable facility. He greeted her this evening, *almost* as if she had been anybody else.

She chided him, laughing and speaking under her breath, with Brescio's melodrama holding a great audience to a hush, just beyond them. "And how is my play coming?" she added and playfully drew him by the hand into a corner acoustically insulated.

"Here you're safe to declaim for me my latest lines," she told him. "Out with to-day's vintage, sir!"

"It's a very green wine," assured



Tuption, trying hard not to thrill as the girl unclasped her fingers. "Moreover I've run into a snag and—I've got to see Brescio."

"So it's Brescio and not Beeby—oh, very well!" Miss Beatrice took mock offense and held her head high. She was an inveterate teaser. "A thousand pardons for intruding, sir."

"Don't mention it," he replied. "Moreover, I happen to know how Miss Beeby has a quick change at this place, and how anyone foolish enough to count on three minutes would be dismissed in two. Is the gentleman I'm after, out front?"

"I think you'll find him at the top of the house," said Miss Desmond, already at her dressing-room door. "He thought he'd study us from the gallery to-night. By-by! Look in on us after Act Four, if you've nothing better."

Then she vanished. Tupton, sensitive to small things, had to note how she had suggested his call after the fourth act instead of the last, when he might have offered his escort home.

She always did that. By no means "swell head," in the professional parlance, nor even invariably dignified, no one could yet point to any single personal attention she had permitted any man—since coming under Brescio's management, at any rate. Back of that period, her history was a more than ordinarily sealed book. Along with other talents, she had a genius for failing to account for herself.

Tuption found Brescio about to enter his office, off the upper foyer. He followed him inside.

"That performance begins to go suitably," began the producing manager, pulling at his curly forelock. "To-night

I only caught one or two little defects, and they were in the light-plot. I'm conceiving Miss Desmond's great scene in 'Snowbound Dixie' as blazing daylight, instead of darkness like the present play. By the way, Tupton—do be seated—have you yet written it in?"

"I have news," announced Tupton, "and I'm wanting information. You'll recall that it has been only a little over three weeks since you supplied me with that scenario. Now I've worked at it at fever heat—"

"An ideal outline indeed!" supplemented the manager absently. "An ideal outline for a play built to the measure of Miss Desmond."

"The information I'm seeking," proceeded Tupton, "comes first. For both our sakes, I beg a frank answer. It concerns the authorship of that scenario."

The manager gave a single darting look from out his familiar troubled remoteness. Then his abstraction re-settled. The aloof look of imaginative energy drew his brows back to their familiar corrugations. With resolute

irresolution, he tugged on at his black forelock.

"The fact is," he seemed to muse rather than say, "the idea came from Miss Desmond herself."

This was startling enough. Making his reservations, Tupton decided to let it do for the present.

"As to the news," the playwright went on, "I can't exactly call it fortunate. You see I have just learned that a similar plot has already been written into a completed play and—practically copyrighted."

"Copyrighted? Impossible!" The manager started up.

"I have definite information that the



"Gabe, do you recall the time—"

first steps toward a copyright have been taken. It's merely a question of getting it from Washington through the mails." Tupton had no conscience for his effect of prevarication. He had the body-substance of truth.

The manager was considerably overcome. Down he sat again, holding his forehead. "No one could have written that play as you and I would have written it—no one," he said. "It gave each of us our exact scope, you as the maker of lines, me as the deviser of atmosphere, of situations. Miss Desmond was a perfect third."

"By the way," ventured Tupton, "you don't happen to remember a personable chap in frayed clothes, and probably a red sweater, who brought a manuscript for your examination about four weeks ago—do you?"

"There are so many who bring me manuscripts," moaned Brescio. "My office boy sees them."

"I thought you might recall this fellow," Tupton persisted, "because of an amusing circumstance. When you asked him for his address, he hadn't any to give you. His apartment alters nightly, it appears, and is abundantly ventilated. His name is Wade Syler, and he is the author of that other 'Snowbound Dixie' for which he has already taken steps toward a copyright: story, scenario, play—the whole thing!"

For some moments there followed a deadly stillness. Then Brescio broke into the temperamental ferocity of his supreme moment. "Look here, Mr. Tupton: For some time I have been perceiving the drift of your insinuations—the meaning of your veiled insults. Now I don't know

what amateur detective work you've been doing, or what this Wade Syler may be to you. But I do know that I have a perfect right to that title and that plot, and that I adopted them with clean hands, because I happened to discover, very fortuitously, that your Mr. Syler had filched them himself. Your Mr. Syler is a cheek-jowled tramp journalist, an out at the elbow Would-be, a Butter-in of—"

"Calmly—go slowly," pacified Tupton. "Did you read his play?"

"Never so much as glanced at it, sir. Were I to look at the outside of all the plays brought me by your fuzzy-frayed fresh-air boarders, I'd turn my theatres into free dispensaries to complete the business. Moreover, your friend Wade, as it happens, arrived on the scene just three days before—" here Brescio interrupted himself to search diligently among certain papers on his desk—"just three days before Miss Desmond gave me that!"

The manager had found the clipping he sought, and passed the same to Tupton. "There," he added.

"Three columns, headed 'Snowbound Dixie,' from an obscure up-state newspaper of three years back. Miss Desmond had preserved that little story, and thought it might have the nucleus of something for her. It was a coincidence in a thousand—but you doubtless perceive where your friend Wade must have found his inspiration."

"Then you did read his scenario," observed Tupton. "Considering that your theatres are not free dispensaries, that was nice of you. But why are you so certain he filched the idea in the clipping? What if he wrote it?"

"Fudge!" Brescio exclaimed.



—I ran into you in London?"



"Then you've made New York just as you promised you would."

"Of course we can try to make him prove he did write it," interrupted Tupton, and concealed his smile in solicitude. "We can write to the *Colkville Sentinel*. But I am afraid on the whole, he's got the drop on us! I am really afraid—with that copyright applied for!"

The manager wished perdition to

"Snowbound Dixie." He wished perdition to everything connected with it. He was audible and elemental.

As for Tupton, he wondered chiefly that Miss Desmond should have had that clipping in her possession; until sudden light broke upon him; light rather harder for the time being, than the previous darkness. He did not call after the fourth act. Foreseeing all, he reasoned along a different line of action. And thus reasoning, he conquered himself, once and finally.

The bringing together of Wade Syler, avatar of childhood memories, and Beatrice Desmond, symbol of renunciations never to be suspected—ungrudgingly pensive, unspeakably sweet—was not to take place until several things had been accomplished. Of what awaited her, the lady concerned was kept in ignorance. But young Syler, who had made a clean breast to Tupton, in many confidential moments, must needs

summon resolution to face his impatience.

"Wait, my boy," Tupton would direct him, "only wait until we've finished this diplomat's business of convincing Brescio that your copyrighted play is far more worthy of his collaboration than my half-finished thing could possibly have been."

"It probably isn't," Syler would od-

ject: half-heartedly, however. Young authors are apt to believe in their work, you know.

But there came the day when Brescio, aided and abetted by Miss Desmond, to whom was shown the anonymous manuscript, saw great possibilities in Syler's "Snowbound Dixie." It couldn't be better, Miss Desmond considered. It only needed the Brescio manipulation. Her private conviction, though quite against his own assurance, was that Tupton had of course written the thing, and was having his little joke.

"Indeed I did not," he protested when it finally developed to open accusation: "In proof whereof, I shall within five minutes present the real author—who happens to be in Mr. Brescio's office right now, signing certain agreements."

The time was morning and the blizzard outside might be heard with unusual emphasis on the stage roof. Miss Desmond's back was to the empty theatre. Hand in glove with Forsyth Brescio, prospective collaborator, Tupton could see young Syler making his way down the aisle. Both of them were well on the stage before Miss Desmond had turned to take languid note of their arrival.

There was no demonstration. Too many eyes looked on. "*Beeby—or—er—* Miss Desmond," said the young man.

"*You!*" she cried, holding her own very well, for all her going white and red. "Then you've made New York, just as you promised you would."

They clasped hands. For the time being that must suffice.

"So have you," he said. "I come in well in the rear."

She turned to the others archly: "Once he interviewed me, you know, and we swapped summaries of our ambitions. He put me into an awfully nice little story called 'Snowbound Dixie,' and—I hadn't seen him since."

"And I haven't seen her since," echoed the young man.

Her laugh was a silver stream of tell-tale happiness. "He will have to see something of me now when we begin those rehearsals."

"Don't let her persecute you with those rehearsals," Tupton advised him. "Stand by your author's privilege."

Everybody, even Brescio, saw the joke. The sunless stage vibrated this morning with a sort of dancing radiance, while "Snowbound Dixie" looked into her lover's eyes and bridged the double gap of years and toil.

"Gabe," said Tupton that night after his man had lighted the gas logs and arranged the Bunsen burner. "Do you recall the time I first ran into you—there in that London lodging house?"

"In the 'allway, sir. Indeed I do cherish it, sir."

"I had a hall-bedroom, Gabe, and it was preternaturally small. I was trying to find the lodging house parlor."

"They don't 'ave 'em in London, sir. In London they lets all the rooms, sir."

"Exactly. Do you remember, then, what you replied when I asked you if there were no place where I might go and sit down and read?"

"I think I directed you to the Row, sir."

"Substantially right. Your answer was, 'Honly 'yde Park, sir!'"

"You're better situated now, sir."

"In some ways, yes," mused the other. "But that was philosophy, Gabe. When one has no breathing nook of his own, he may always sit down, with his book, if 'honly in 'yde Park.' Out in the open, Gabe, in the open! What?"

"That 'e may sir," agreed Gabe. "An 'e can tyke 'is fine view o' the stars, sir, when daylight goes out—beggin' your pardon, sir."



# The Dam

BY HUGH S. JOHNSON

THERE had been no warning of the war. The Pacific cables had ceased to work and the Atlantic fleet voyaged southward. Then, the lifting fog-curtain across Monterey Bay disclosed the Japanese transports riding at anchor in the offing. The puny flower of the American army was destroyed at a blow, and the great, half-trained colossus that now lay sprawled along the edge of the last green strip of California, with the desert behind it, and a new Japanese Empire in front, was the remaining hope of the Union on the Coast.

For the country had settled earnestly to the bitter business of war. It had strengthened the remnant of that early-destroyed army of laymen, in every way that six-months' time can strengthen an army. There were sent to it thousands of eager but untrained volunteers, hundreds of guns, and mountains of supplies. Eagerness and guns and supplies do not make armies and of this fact the invaders at least were confidently aware.

Japan had been very busy, organizing to remain, taking toll for the cost of war, and converting the mountain passes into miniature Port Arthurs. Up to this time they had paid scant heed to the huddled and defeated remnant that still held the gate of the last feasible avenue of attack from the states beyond the mountains. The time had come to seal that gap and render themselves as securely in possession as hills and desert could make them.

Perhaps they had waited a month too long. The American general, Eblee, was a theoretical soldier, but he was, first of all, an organizer—and he had done good work. It was true, that at his back, were only the desert and the shimmering rails of the Southern Pacific leading across it to safety. But his right flank rested firmly in the mountains, his left in a strong position on the Mexican frontier, and his center was manned by his best troops.

"They will strike our left and try to crumple it back on the center, and then push us from our railroad and into the mountains," the General predicted. "If they succeed, we're lost—but they won't succeed."

The American extreme right consisted of two regiments of cavalry, posted at the great dam of the Santa Symprosa Irrigation Project.

"Where that wild Indian, Bolles," the General said, "won't have any chance to go cavorting around with his 'splendid survivals,' getting in the way of good infantry, and spoiling what little strategy there is in this war."

Eblee did not believe in cavalry. He had even decried the rear-guard work of Bolles' regiments, which same work had saved the remnant of the First Army in its long flight down the length of California. The general was a soldier of the new Germanic school, with which nothing could have been more at outs than that same hard-riding, irreverent, chance-taking Bolles who, with his admiring and sympathetic troopers, was enduring his banishment from the supposed seat of war with the worst of grace. To Bolles, Eblee sent a bespectacled and well-crammed Lieutenant, fresh from a service school.

"To instill a little modern science into your command," the tactless order said. Considering that Bolles had been chasing White Mountain Apaches across the Arizona alkali, when the Lieutenant was still kicking on a counterpane, he, Bolles, was not vastly pleased.

"Look here, Napoleon," was his greeting, "I have no doubt at all of your ability and acquirements, but I wish you'd demonstrate them for me by figuring out the stresses and strains of the Santa Symprosa dam, the amount of water it backs up, and the country it controls."

"That will keep him busy for ten

days," Bolles explained to the British Observer, who had insisted upon remaining at Cavalry Headquarters in spite of many invitations from the General, "and by *that* time I expect doings along this line."

"But why the dam? I should think you could *get* all that information—if you have the *faintest* need for it."

"Heavens, man, I don't care a blue fig about the *dam*—it'll keep him from messing with my troops, wont it?"

"Oh," said the Guards' Major, "*I see.*"

In the fullness of their own good time the Japanese turned their attention to the growing army in the South, and out in front of Eblee's long line their perfectly ordered divisions began to take positions on a parallel range of hills.

For five days the forces lay facing each other across the valley of the Santa Symprosa, with no other evidence of either's presence than the helios winking from the crests by day and the rare bar of a search-light's beam against the sky by night.

Then began a week of scientific sparring. An aeroplane chugged and whirled across the American lines at a thousand feet, one morning at dawn. It drew a sputtering fire from the Japanese hills, and then, swooping toward it from the invaders' signal station, came the first of the blue Odzu monoplanes to be seen in the war. The American had the wings of his pursuer and he began a sweeping *reconnaissance* of the whole line. Over the center, he ran fairly counter of a vertical battery firing "marking" shells, that left a parabolic wake of stringy, heavy smoke, and finally brought the American to the earth, wheeling and tumbling out of the sky like a wounded sand-hill crane.

Patrols were wrangling in the valley and finally a force of Japanese cavalry struck Eblee's right flank, driving in Bolles' outposts, where the narrow gorge of the Santa Symprosa cañon debouches on the valley. It was their first real experience with American dragoons. Upon them descended Bolles like an angry deity. He caught them in the open,

slashed them with short-range fire and drove them pell-mell to their hills and the cover of their artillery. But they came back, to follow an erratic course down Eblee's front. They were checking the reports of their aeroplanes and patrols. After they disappeared, there was an ominous quiet for two days and then—along the whole left wing of the American army, from the center to the very Mexican line, the Japs opened the ball with their guns.

They sprayed the trenches with indirect shrapnel fire and hunted the hills for the range. Then they found the American artillery positions and proceeded methodically to pound them. The gunners' work in that battle was a bit of well-turned beauty. One by one, Eblee's field-pieces withdrew from the Yankee chorus, and they did it so plausibly that even the General was not certain that his artillery had not been duly silenced. The ruse worked well, for on the heels of the last salvos, came the premature infantry advance and, over the distant sky-line, the long black columns began to pour. They disintegrated in the V of the valley and came out of the cover of the trees along the stream, in a slender cordon of skirmishers that looked, through the field glasses, like a string of infinitesimal beads on an invisible wire. They were about half-way up the defenders' slope when every gun in the American left wing opened on them. A horizontal sheet of shrapnel and machine-gun fire struck them like a blight. They crumpled but came on, and down to the cover of the trees rushed their reserves.

The American infantry had just opened fire when a staff-officer brought Eblee Bolles' message, reporting activity in the front of that detached and forgotten position in the hills. The general was quite ready to stand firm in the strength of his prophecy.

"Mere demonstration on our right," he said, not taking his glasses from his eyes. "Tell Major Bolles that we are in full possession of the details of this attack—and you might add, Caldwell, that he needn't be alarmed."

Squatting at the far end of the field-

buzzer Bolles received this message and swore.

"I needn't be alarmed—*needn't I?* As if I couldn't get out of the way of any skip-two-and-carry-a-dozen saddle-colored-serfs-of-the-Orient that have ever shouldered a rifle—I needn't be alarmed. Well when the end of this theoretical, Deutcherized line crumples like a jack-knife, we'll see who needs to be alarmed."

"You really needn't, you know, Major," ventured the well-crammed Lieutenant. "They have nothing to gain by attacking us in force here and all the German authorities are unanimous—" He got no further.

"Slow up, Von Moltke. I don't know what the German authorities say about the Santa Symprosa dam, but American common-sense says that it controls this theatre of operations like an electric push-button—" Bolles stopped suddenly as though distracted by something in his own words. The lieutenant thought that "something" was their rather rough jocularly. He smiled faintly, patronizingly.

"Oh, that's all right, Major. I don't mind a little chaffing."

Bolles heard this remark no more than he noticed the good-natured sarcasm of Major Barwell-Carruthers, of the Guards:

"You don't seem to have much influence with your general, Bolles."

Forty miles away, the general was beaming with elation. For the infantry fire of the defenders had completed the work of the guns. From where Eblee stood he could see below him a few squat figures, staggering like drunken men in a yellow fog. But the fog was the heavy, saffron smoke of exploding shells and the dust and earth kicked up from the hillside by the withering fire of his own rifles and guns. It lay along the valley as far as he could see. In its cover the broken Japanese line had hesitated a moment—only a moment; after that, it went scuttling down the hill in chaotic rout. Already news of an American victory was being blocked out before cheering crowds on a thousand bulletin boards throughout the states. It was the first

reversal of humiliation and utter gloom in the six months' war, and it produced an hysterical enthusiasm that peacetime words cannot suggest. Stores and offices were not closed. They were deserted with open doors, and the streets were filled with mobs of joy-crazed people.

Eblee was certain of what to expect now. The enemy's attack had developed exactly as he had deduced it. They were trying to force him from the railroad and destroy him in the hills. He knew that the assault would be repeated and he began drawing fresh troops from his center and even from the far-off right flank.

"Bolles—at the Santa Symprosa dam—two regiments of cavalry—" the chief of staff read, from his list of available reserves.

"Oh, cavalry has no bid to this party," Eblee ordered, "leave 'em there. If we get *that* badly stalled we can send for 'em."

All that night troops from the center and right were stumbling in through the darkness to be assigned to positions by sleepy staff-officers who had been in the saddle for hours on end. With the dawn came the opening guns of the renewed attack. In retrospect, there was something unusual about that attack that, in the elation of its repulse, Eblee cannot be blamed for overlooking, any more than he blamed himself, when Bolles' second message came growling over the field-buzzer:

"Force of Japanese of all arms marching up the gorge of the Santa Symprosa cañon. Conservative estimate—forty thousand men. Reports indicate that it is the Second Japanese Field Army—Field Marshal Tsushima. You might add for me to the General, Caldwell, in a purely unofficial way, that I, personally, am not in the least alarmed, though I am sure that the Right of the Line is completely enveloped and the last position for American troops is rendered untenable. We may be able to put up a bluff and hold 'em for an hour—they're ten miles away—say four hours in all. I'm waiting orders."

It is difficult to make clear enough the significance of Tsushima's flanking move-

ment in the Battle of Santa Symprosa. The frontal attack on Eblee's left wing had been a colossal feint, to allow the approach, on an unprotected portion of the American position, of an overwhelming force, which (once it had reached the dam), by its mere presence decided the battle more completely than any amount of firing and death could ever decide it. Eblee was not only checkmated, he was rendered helpless, boxed, tied and tagged for transportation. He knew it before his aide had half-finished the stammered message. To his credit be it said that his first thought was of the waiting, cheer-hoarse Americans, whom he had deceived by his early confident messages of victory. Eblee was not a strong man; he was only a superficially brilliant one and he had been completely cozened. He sat limply down upon a rock and his flushed, tired face dropped to his knees and folded arms. The chief of staff assumed control.

Out at the dam, Bolles' two regiments were standing "to horse" in columns of masses, eagerly watching the little group of waiting officers about the box of the field-buzzer on the ground. Bolles was fully as bitter in his rage and disappointment as Eblee could possibly have been, but he was a different stamp of man. He could even reply to the chaffing of the British *attaché*.

Major Barwell-Carruthers had had much to suffer in his weeks with Bolles. A camp-intimacy that allowed it had sprung up between them, and the distinctively American Bolles had lost no opportunity, and overlooked no racial peculiarity, in that time. The South-Sea generic term of "lime-juicer" had been shortened to mere "lime," and not one time honored quip had been forgotten.

Major Carruthers' day had come, and he was making gentle use of it. "You've got to give it to the little beggars, Bolles. Right up to your back-door—and your outposts all asleep—I say, old fay-low, it's rough. You'd better show 'em your heels—their infantry will catch you."

"Don't you worry about their infantry, Lime; they haven't got the Santa Symprosa dam—yet, you know."

"There's no use holdin' 'em, I'd say—even if you *could*. The General couldn't possibly get enough troops here to do any good, in ten hours' time. The refreshin' audacity of 'em though! Marchin' up a cañon that way. They wouldn't have done that if they hadn't known you Yankees were asleep. Too risky and gives you too good a chance to pot 'em. As it was, it screened the movement from the aeroplanes and the like. Oh, you've got to give it to 'em."

Some thought of his own was filling Bolles with heightening and helpless anger.

"If I could only reach the artillery ammunition column," he fumed, half-aloud, "I'd fix 'em yet."

"Artillery column? You'd better get to the rear and try to escape the general capture. You'll look fit after you've lived on the fish and rice diet of a prison camp for a year. Why are you waitin'?"

"I'm waiting to see how much time the general wants."

"He'll get the time Japanese infantry needs to march nine miles—it's precious little."

Bolles started to reply when the man at the receiver interrupted.

"Message comin' over, sir," he said. Bolles took the receiver.

"Yes," he called, "Bolles—Santa Symprosa dam."

"The general's orders are that you withdraw toward the center. Other advices confirm the report that our right flank is completely turned. Destroy all supplies. The general also says that you should have obtained information of this movement long before you did. He holds you responsible. We're completely done for."

Bolles' face became crimson with anger. He mumbled something into the mouth-piece.

"What's that?" came clearly over the wire. "Didn't you get the message?"

"Didn't get a word of it," growled Bolles. "Something the matter with the line." And he reached out where the black thread of the buzzer lay along the ground, grasped it in a strong hand, and before ten witnesses deliberately jerked it asunder.



"Now, Lime," he bantered as he got to his feet, "I'll bet you a month's pay against your Whippy saddle that I hold the Japs in the cañon until—until—until the general gets away."

There was one idea dominant in the mind of Eblee's chief-of-staff. *That* was, to get as many men as his limited time would let him aboard the trains that lay waiting in black and puffing ranks on the newly built switches of the main base, and away toward the safety of the states. He kept a brave show of force on the front where three successive Japanese attacks had been repulsed on the preceding days, but back at the base, where the night was lighted to a ghastly day by the flames of the fires that were forever saving great hillocks of supplies from Japanese capture, and the shrieking of locomotive whistles drowned all sound, and the confusion of hurrying men made passage perilous, regiment after regiment was being loaded on anything that ran on wheels. He had hoped for ten hours, and when that time had dragged by, and a second relay of freight cars came rumbling out of the desert, he stopped long enough to say to the general:

"It's not as bad as we thought, sir. Five brigades of the First Field Army have been entrained. New cars are here and there aren't any more reports from Bolles."

"It's bad enough," groaned Eblee. "Think of Washington—think of the States! After we'd reported a victory, too. Oh, I don't want to go back—I don't want to go back—"

Looming like a specter in the red glare, a staff-officer galloped straight for temporary headquarters and began calling the general's name.

"Here—" said Eblee wearily, "*here*—I suppose it's all over now."

The boy threw himself from his horse and stood panting and trying to speak. A group of disconsolate correspondents looked up from the brims of their pulled-down hats, and finally rose and drew closer. No one interfered with them.

"Message—from Major Bolles—sir," gasped the aide. "He presents Mar—shal

Tsushima's un—conditional surrender—Fifty thousand men—sir—colors and guns—but for God's sake—get troops there—general, it's a—bluff—and it may bust—any moment—"

The Japanese advance, marching up the floor of Santa Symprosa cañon, heard firing on the plateau above them and on both flanks. Their service of information had been perfect, and the firing disturbed no one. They knew that they could reach the Santa Symprosa dam before any considerable force could cut them off. They had placed flank guards in advance of their columns on both sides of the cañon's walls—guards with strength enough to brush Bolles' little force aside without so much as stopping. Field Marshal Tsushima glanced smilingly up at the cliffs that rose a sheer five hundred feet on either side of his massed columns, but he did no more.

Ten minutes later an aide signaled down from above. An officer stopped to take the message, but the staff did not draw rein. Then the man galloped up and turned in his report.

The general began reading it, marching, but before he was half through it he raised his hand for "halt." There was more signaling and at last, that signaling became frantic. The firing had ceased and the whole Japanese army was receiving word to stand fast. There was a ripple of excitement that became a questioning murmur. For Field Marshal Tsushima, after more wig-wagging and many exclamations, dismounted and made a scrambling, painful way up a zig-zag trail to the top of the cañon, to a consultation with an American major, who had given good and sufficient reasons for not coming down.

Marshal Tsushima was met by officers of the right flank guard and conducted to a large flat rock on which were spread maps, tracings and blue prints of the Santa Symprosa dam. A white flag of truce was leaning against a tree, and an officer in American khaki was languidly explaining something to an interpreter, who was excitedly retailing it to a pushing, craning circle of Japanese officers.

"You can see for yourself, sir," Bolles

drawled, when the gist of his previous talk had been retailed to the general, "the dam is three hundred feet high and half-a-mile long. Here are the figures on the water it backs up," and he proffered a closely-covered sheet, sprinkled with Greek symbols and footed by an under-scored result, in which the word "gals" tailed off a row of figures that covered the bottom of it from edge to edge. "Here is a contoured map of the cañon, showing the 'fall' we get. You see—the gorge narrows again, below here, about opposite where your supply-trains are now. Labor could have been saved by building the dam there, but it wouldn't have given the tremendous "head" of water we need here, for power. Now, sir, we have the whole Symprosa dam fairly honey-combed with Rack-a-Rock. Here is an elevation of the front face—we weren't taking any chances, you perceive. There are about three tons of explosive—more or less." The last sheet was a wide blue print on which had been traced with red ink the current lines of an electric detonator that ramified to power charges indicated on the wall of the dam. "As I started to say, sir, you can see from this that fourteen minutes after I give the signal to the look-out, standing over there on the peak of Conduit Point, all the ground that your army now occupies will be covered with a torrential flood of fifty feet of water. A few of your men might escape—but it's extremely doubtful." Bolles hesitated a little and stammered becomingly.

"You will understand, sir," he went on, "that when the time came for me to act, I found myself unable to take the responsibility for such an unprecedented destruction of human life, without giving you some opportunity of avoiding it."

There was bickering and there was bluster, and many requests for armistices, and time to consult superiors—deprecations of unheard of methods of warfare, and diplomacy, and references to the precepts of the Geneva Convention. Bolles had not played twenty years of poker for nothing. He made one great concession when he allowed a detail of Japanese officers to be conducted to the dam. One sight of it was enough.

At a black box of a friction detonator a young officer was waiting with his hand on the plunger, intently watching a sergeant who stood on the opposite wall, a red flag held horizontally and well away from his body. From the base of this box a cable of black cords lay fifty yards across the ground to the cañon wall and there ramified into many strands that ran to different points across the curving face of the dam. A sentinel kept the investigators at a respectful distance. A troop of dismounted men heightened the effect from the shelter of every rock and tree, prepared for and safe from any terrific explosion that might occur.

The stupendous audacity of "Bolles' Bluff" may be bruited down the ages, but history holds no moment of more acute suspense than the one Bolles suffered while the Japanese staff was jargoning its report to its general. What they were saying was:

"Sir, there is an officer standing over the dam who holds in the crook of his finger the life of every man in the gorge."

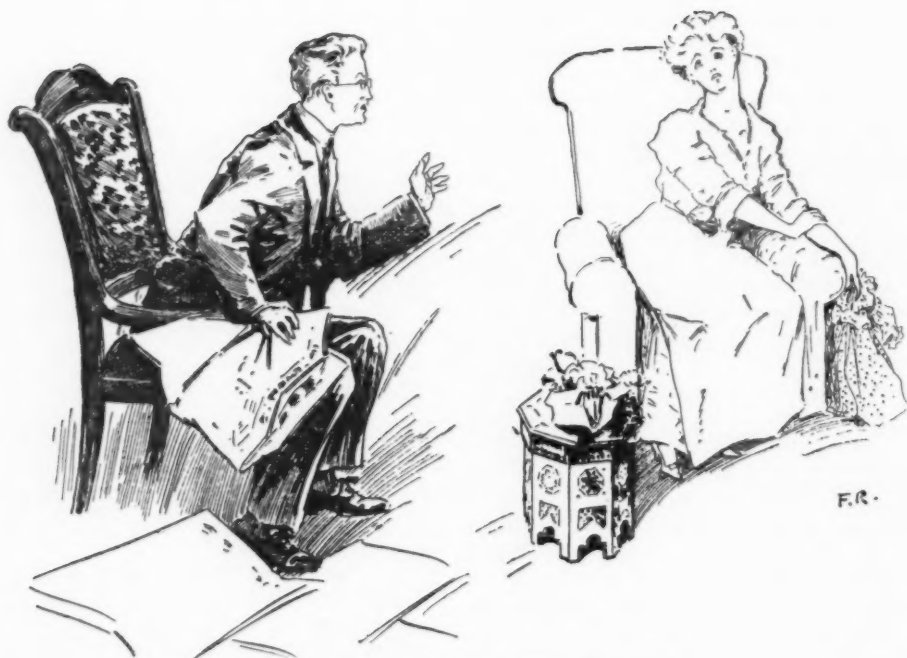
What Bolles' rather vulgar imagination feared they were saying was:

"Sir, the cables are cavalry lariats, blackened with harness dressing, the charges are mud-daubs on the wall, the detonator—if all the rest were real—is, on its face, inadequate, and this man has the American Doctor Cook kicked into a corner and begging for mercy as the teller of historic and colossal lies."

But it was not until the last Japanese prisoner had toiled up the incline that leads out of the Symprosa cañon, and the last wagon of the captured supply train had gone creaking into park, that even Eblee was informed of the details of the surrender of Tsushima. And that was when Major Barwell Carruthers, Military Observer for the British Army, handed to the general a splotchily stained and (at close range) palpably counterfeit electric detonator.

"Allow me to present you, sir," he begged, "as a suggested pedestal for Major Bolles' statue in your Hall of Fame, one empty, but forever glorified, hard-tack box."

And beyond the desert, a nation, not yet fully enlightened, was aflame with joy.



"Poor little Martiel His father don't love him any more"

## Mr. Fossdick's Didoes

BY EMERY POTTLE

Author of "Anne and I and Algernon," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY FREDERICK RICHARDSON

MR. HENRY FOSSDICK had what he called "ideas" on the holy estate of matrimony. He was a disciple of, let us say, New Thought in wedlock. These theories did not set in until some time after marriage. Before that he courted Rosalie Peterson in pleasant harmony with the time-honored methods of winning the coveted female, and suffered himself to be led to the altar in a conventional state of frock-coat and other nuptial accessories, in full view of a gloating audience. His dependence continued until after the birth of The Baby—an event which took place without unnecessary delay. Then he woke up, as it were, to the slothful state of his brain

in connection with the conditions of the situation in which he found himself. But as Mrs. Fossdick was not in the least advanced in her conceptions of connubial intimacy—relying upon the simple and bourgeois examples of her mother and her grand-mother for inspiration, and on her ardent attachment to Henry—he thought it best to refrain from some of his philosophies in her presence. Away from Rosalie he expanded.

His theories began with germs—germs, that is, in connection with The Baby. He bought a stylish baby treatise for Mrs. Fossdick. Up to that time she had depended on her mother for advice. Her mother had, unaided by sterilizing, raised

eight offspring with healthful success, and Rosalie quite reasonably felt that her parent knew what she was talking about. She timidly pointed this out to Henry. He ignored it.

"This is a modern child," said he impressively. "It's got to be cared for by strictly up-to-date methods."

Thus to be summarily relegated, along with her family, to the early-Victorian period bewildered Mrs. Fosdick and made her slightly resentful. However, being in awe of Henry and imbued with the notion that the fount of wisdom spurted originally from his lips, she patiently began to boil and brew The Baby's sustenance, notwithstanding that it took her three or four hours a day to accomplish her sanitary labors. The sterilizing, it must be confessed, raised a slight barrier between Mr. Fosdick and his mother-in-law, Mrs. Peterson—a barrier which rose several feet when she discovered, not long after, that Henry had taken a room of his own. She compressed her lips. "*Didoes!*"

"Well, all I have to say is," she went on acidly to her daughter, "that marriage seems to have changed a good deal since your father and I started in." It was by no means all she had to say, though that was the gist of her remarks. But this, after all, was precisely the point that Mr. Fosdick was vigorously illustrating. His mother-in-law was not, however, at all in tune with his song of progress. She was not "modern."

From these beginnings Mr. Fosdick moved on resolutely, if not rapidly. Rosalie was reduced to fear and dread and secret sorrow when, in flat defiance of Presidential trumpetings, Henry broke to her his conclu-

sions on the ultimate size of his family. He was very logical and brought in as incontestable evidence the amount of his income, their probable expenditures, and the limits of their very modern new house. From these he branched off—with pencil and paper—into intricate figures on the cost of children's garments, common-school education and college courses, floridly intimating to his stricken and speechless wife that he was "going to give 'em the best and nothing but the best."

"Two—no more," was the end of it all.

And when Rosalie's mother was tearfully apprised of this revolutionary step the barrier became a mountain from whose cloudy height she thundered: "Well, all I have to say is, when it comes to interfering with Divine Providence—"

It must not be supposed that the Fosdicks dwelt in discord, nor that, for all his devastating theories Mr. Fosdick was offensive and complaining and unduly masterful in the home. He was a mild, pink-cheeked gentleman, of prim habits and rather affectionate impulses. He wore spectacles and seemed likely to become a warden in St. Peter's. In everything he was very earnest and painstaking. His wife, who was also mild and pink-cheeked, had not as yet lost her maid-



She compressed her lips—"Didoes!"



enly timidities and acquired the domestic poise and precision which extended matrimonial experience is wont to engender. She was far too busy looking after The Baby, The House, and The Servant to indulge in broodings. Besides, there were her social activities and the Guild work to fill up her spare moments. Henry's ideas, to be sure, went against almost all her early precepts, confused and perturbed her, but, despite her mother's Cassandra warnings, she was not in a state to combat. She was even weak enough to hazard that "probably Henry was right"—upbraid her as her parent might. Moreover she was of a bright nature and not given to inner research.

On their wedding journey the Fosdicks had visited Niagara Falls and the Thousand Islands, but since that immortal—and very properly so—journey, nearly two years had passed and they had not been able to "vacate," as he jocosely put it. The following June The Baby had arrived—there had been some desire on Mr. Fosdick's part to call it Hannibal or Hamilcar, nobody knew why, but he was dissuaded ultimately by his wife's lamentations and they compromised on Martin Luther. This advent with its oppressive expenses wrought speedy reformation in their plans; they were obliged to give up their allotted three weeks of outing and stay in their bright, new house all summer. It was not all a hardship, for they dwelt in a country-like little inland city, tree-ful and pretty. Moreover Mr. Fosdick labored violently if experimentally in their fifteen-by-twenty garden plot and acquired wisdom and freckles.

But at the time of this present record of the Fosdick family, The Baby was a year old and there seemed to be nothing likely to interfere with an enchanting vacation for the three of them. Rosalie, indeed, in the evenings when she sat alone with her consort, had fallen into the habit of making this coming summer exodus of theirs the shining pivot whence radiated all conversational spokes. Her husband let her talk on, and even with guileful zest encouraged her simple imaginings. He had, however, his own notions of that vacation.

It was tacitly understood that they were to go to Mrs. Peterson for the holiday. It must be explained that the Peterson family had for years passed the summer in a minute but extraordinarily elastic cottage at the seaside. It had been named in defiance of marine botany, though not of poetical fancy, *Sea Flower*, by Rosalie herself. Mr. Fosdick's one recorded jest was—"Why not *Sea Urchin*?" when he had first seen it bursting out with the Peterson children. Here he had wooed his own floweret by the luxuriant gardens of the deep—to prolong the figure; and here in consequence centered Mrs. Fosdick's sweetest memories.

Now Mr. Fosdick had no antipathy to the *Sea Flower*—on the contrary. But in the course of an extremely modern novel which had accidentally found its way into his home—and which Rosalie had modestly refused to read—he had seen it offered among other much more rebellious conceptions that it was a mistake for husband and wife to spend their entire time in each other's society. Change was needed, it appeared, in order to preserve that freshness of intimacy which in the alchemy of matrimony is the fondly sought re-action for turning to gold the baser elements. This forcibly struck Mr. Fosdick. He pondered it in his heart. And the upshot of his reflections was that it would be better for himself and Rosalie if they spent the larger part of their vacation apart.

At the Country Club, over a "horse's-neck," he aired this theory sophisticatedly, after the finish of eighteen holes. "The thing is," said he authoritatively, "married people see too much of each other."

Nobody denying this axiomatic utterance, he proceeded. "They get stale. No one has only one friend—you have a number."

He paused impressively, and his hearers waited with some interest what seemed to be the highly scandalous deduction from these premises.

"So a man ought to get away from his family from time to time, and his family from him. It does 'em both good," he illogically completed. "Now I'm going to send my wife and child off to her

mother's cottage and I'm coming out here to take a room for our vacation."

"Fosdick, you're a bold, bad man," dropped somebody.

Mr. Fosdick flushed brightly. "I have no intention, young man, of forgetting for an instant my sacred duties to my wife and child."

This comparatively tame outcome to what had promised to be a somewhat racy discussion of the husband at large broke up the conference.

About a week before their exodus, being no longer able to withhold from his wife his salutary plan for their freshening-up, Mr. Fosdick broke the news to her. She did not at first grasp it. Presently the horrid scheme grew luridly plainer.

"Do you mean that you're going to send off Baby and me?" she quavered with trembling lip.

"Pshaw, dear," said he uneasily, "don't talk as if we were separating legally. You'll have a change—a fine one. And so will I."

This latter remark was not tactful. "So you're sick of Baby and me." The tears gushed from her eyes.

"No, I aint," cried Mr. Fosdick excitedly. "How can you be so silly?"

"Then wh-wh-why are you going to l-l-leave us?"

"I've just told you," he replied, much harassed. "Can't you see, dear? It's for our own good. We'll come back fresh as daisies—new things to talk about—

new ideas—everything! You see too much of me. Don't you see?"

She did not see. "No, I don't, Henry, see too much of you."

This annoyed Mr. Fosdick and upset his contention. "You do, too, Rosalie."

"I don't," she sobbed. "I can't bear it when you're away."

He wiped his perspiring face and lowered his voice to a confidential, soothing note. "Darling, you don't understand. There's nobody who cares more than I do for his home and family. Now it is just for that reason, don't you see, that I want to preserve it,"—he added impressively—"in its integrity."

"I don't know what its integrity is," retorted Rosalie, with some spirit, "but I do know that you're trying to get rid of Baby and me—and that isn't preserving us."

He lost his patience again. "Oh, dash! Little Martin could under-

stand me just as well as you!"

"Poor little Martin," murmured Mrs. Fosdick gruesomely, "his father doesn't love him any more."

Mr. Fosdick's skin prickled with indignation. "Well, if I ever—"

"No," his wife crooned on lugubriously, "no, nor little Martin's mamma. He wants to send us off alone—all alone. He's tired of us."

His blood boiled with helpless wrath. However he made one last effort at control. "Now see here, darling, you aren't



He flung his fishing trousers in a corner

taking this thing reasonably. I told you I'd come down and bring you home. It's new interests that we need. Why you'll see all your old friends and have the best kind of a time, and when we get back home again we'll be as happy as—as—*as larks*." He could not avoid this popular though unsubstantiated comparison.

It turned out to be most unfortunate. Mrs. Fosdick in the attitude of an abandoned wife and mother seemed to be rocking an imaginary cradle. Her eyes were set and glassy. "Larks," she muttered maniacally, "larks, Martie. Papa wants larks, do you hear. He wants to leave us and go on larks, poor little Martie."

Mr. Fosdick in a frenzy flung down his newspaper. This aerial conception of his worthy intentions rendered him well-nigh beside himself. "My Heavens!" he shouted.

"Now he's cursing us, Baby."

He stamped his feet impotently. "Listen to me!"

His shattered wife tottered to her feet. "You can say what you like, Henry. You can abuse Baby and me. You can break our hearts. But I sha'n't go one step away from this house without you."

Before he could collect himself she had left the room. It was a good hour afterward when he felt reasonably certain that for the time being he had escaped an apoplectic fit.

Mr. Fosdick held no further converse with his wife that evening. Indeed on the morrow, even though he had again laid hold on his runaway nerves, it was rather of a relief to him to learn that Mrs. Fosdick was suffering from sick-headache and could not come down. She had never before failed in her wifely coffee-pouring—except of course at the arrival of Martin Luther—and her "Now, don't work too hard to-day, dearie," as he departed. Regretting this affectionate beginning of the day as he did, he yet felt that to undergo another scene like that of the preceding night would result for him in insanity. He plucked a rose—the rose one might say—from their garden and sent it up by Hannah with his good-by. He spent an ineffectual day working on the problems

of how to instill into Rosalie the first principles of logic. All he could make out of it was that if she continued in her distressing and ridiculous obstinacies he should have to insist on his course. "And she'll be the first to acknowledge I was right when it's over," he consoled himself.

During Mr. Fosdick's absence, Mrs. Peterson ran in to see how The Baby was and to know if Rosy was going to begin operations in the strawberry-jam field—a delicacy especially toothsome to Henry. It took that skilled lady about two minutes to extract from her pallid, weeping, and unwilling child the pith of the argument of the night before. When she had grasped, as it were, the nettles with unflinching hand, her indignation at their sting was memorable.

"You say you wont go without him? You just listen to your own mother, Rosy Peterson. You'll come right down there with little Martie! Do you hear me? Just as fast as you can. We're going to-morrow and you're going right along too. The idea! Wont spend his vacation with his own wife and child? Well, that's a pretty how-de-do! You just let me manage this and in three days Henry Fosdick will be ready enough to come down there. I know 'em, these men. I guess if your Pa'd ever tried any of those monkey-tricks with me he'd have heard from it. Forty years married and until he died he never left me a single night but one when he was out of town about his mother's tomb-stone and I had German measles and couldn't go. You listen to me, my dear. I know what I'm talking about. You get yourself right ready to-day and we'll start together."

"I can't leave Henry," gasped Rosalie wretchedly. Her sobs had turned to hiccoughs.

"He can leave you."

"I know he can. Oh, dear! Oh, Baby! What will become of us!"

"Rosalie Peterson Fosdick—stop those goings-on this minute! I'll have no daughter of mine whimpering around like that after a man—even if he is her husband. Haven't you got any spirit—any spunk? You get up from that bed! Do you hear me? Let him try staying alone



With desperate caution he drew near

at that Country Club — full of mosquitoes and red ants it is too. He'll get sick of it. And *then we'll see!* If he's so brash to be alone, give him his chance—No, there isn't any other woman! He isn't that kind. It's just his didoes."

In such like primitive and simple speech did Mrs. Peterson hearten her daughter. And while it would be interesting to set down in its entirety her discourse, it is perhaps sufficient to note that after an hour or more of its vigor she succeeded in cowing Rosalie to heel. In consequence, that evening when Mr. Fosdick, in extreme uncertainty, sought his domicile he found the two of them washing away the unguilty stains of the new-made jam and learned that his mother-in-law was remaining for dinner with them.

It was Mrs. Peterson—for Rosalie was mute and pale and rather sniffly—who broke the news of her intended seizure of Rosy and The Baby the next day. She

was quite affable about it and seemed in a good humor. The only mention of his desire to be separated from his family which she allowed herself was: "I thought she might as well go with us as long as you want to go off with your crowd and play that silly golf."

This precipitation of his design did not entirely please Mr. Fosdick. It seemed to him as if he were being done by instead of doing. But for all that he had no decent grounds of protest. And when Rosalie—quailing under her parent's glittering eye—made tremulous assent to the plan, there was nothing more to do. With all the winds gone utterly from his sails of triumph Mr. Fosdick acquiesced—even made show of eager acquiescence.

On the morrow Mrs. Fosdick and little Martie departed. There would have been a heart-tearing farewell—or more likely no farewell at all, no going indeed, for poor Rosalie was in agonies—had not Mrs. Peterson foreseen disgraceful



weakness and arrived in a cab a good hour before train time, thus steadying the situation. Mr. Fosdick kept a bright face and a frantic handkerchief till his family were out of sight, but he returned to the hardware business rather dashed. That evening was so desperately lonesome and the little house so desperately empty that he decided to shut it up and at once betake himself to the jovial quarters of the Country Club, thence to go to and fro until his vacation was actually upon him, a week later. He did so.

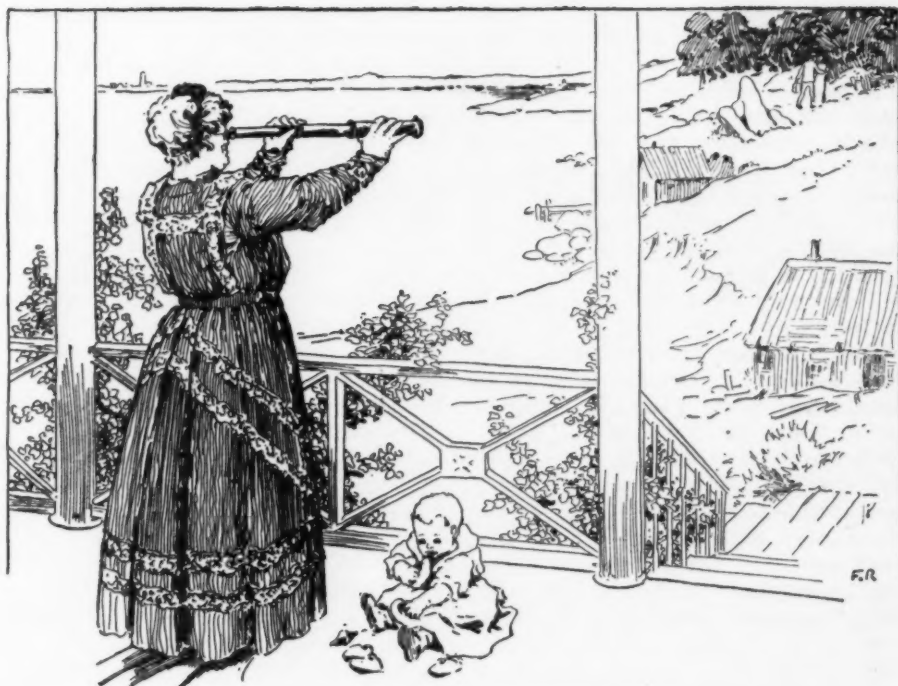
Pride upheld Mr. Fosdick to some extent during the next five days, pride and conscious rectitude in his matrimonial philosophies. There was no one at the club, regularly, save himself and a deaf old gentleman who snorted through his nose contemptuously at most things he understood and at all he did not. He had a dreadful passion for double-dummy bridge and waylaid Mr. Fosdick at highly unseasonable moments. In the absence of any of his other friends he had to take to his bed to escape him.

The food disagreed with him shockingly. He hated rising at a beastly hour to catch the early trolley into town. There were, as Mrs. Peterson had unpleasantly affirmed, red ants and mosquitoes. He caught a nasty cold in his head sitting in draughty rooms. Nor had he the solace of strong drink. Mr. Fosdick never touched liquor. He flooded his angry system, instead, with ginger-ale to drown care. But care was a cat and his system was the only thing drowned.

To his friends he put up a worldly front, and by-Jove-it's-good-to-be-out-here till he almost had himself convinced. His friends didn't seem to be interested. By a strange coincidence they seemed that week, all of them, to have become enamored anew of their wives. If they were not with them they were just rushing off to join them. In the few moments they gave to Mr. Fosdick they occupied their time by recounting fatuous tales of their infants, no one of which, as he well knew, could compare



Mr. Fosdick took her in his arms and made clucking noises



Mrs. Peterson, with a spy-glass to her eye, gazed after them

with Martin Luther. It was sickening. His theories looked like something discovered under a board in the early springtime. Rosalie's letters, to add the last unbearable touch, seemed quite cheerful and complacent. They spoke of the weather which was unusually fine, and Martie's little teeth, and the good home-cooking, and the "sings" they had every night on the beach, and hoped his golf was getting on well, and mentioned that the cottagers had quite a nice links there, and that the summer had never started off any better, *etc., etc.* But they did not refer to his absence from their affectionate circle except in polite terms.

All at once on the sixth day—the day but one before his vacation really began—Mr. Fosdick gave in. He was lonesome. He admitted it with a sore heart. He cast his theory to Ballyhoo. He wanted his wife. He wanted his baby. Without a blush at his inconsistencies he telegraphed:

Am coming down Saturday for vacation. Love.

Henry.

The next night came a special delivery letter just as Mr. Fosdick was lovingly folding his old fishing-trousers into his trunk. It was from his mother-in-law. It was, too, couched in terms of almost fulsome affection. Its full fine import smote him only on a second reading. It appeared there wasn't any room for him in the *Sea Flower*. Rosalie had the little room at the head of the stairs and Martie and sister Felicia were sleeping with her. There followed a complete register of the inmates and their quarters. "If we'd only have known that you were coming, dear Henry—" it went on, "but of course we couldn't have guessed that—we wouldn't have invited Gifford Small who is coming to-morrow and is going to have the only other bed left, in the boys' room."

Mr. Fosdick, with a church-warden's curse, flung the fishing-trousers in a

corner. Bright crimson spots of anger lit his cheeks. Gifford Small! Ass! Gifford Small indeed!

It may be explained here that Mr. Small had coursed for the prize of Rosalie in competition with Mr. Fosdick, and it had seemed, excitingly, several times in the race, that he was to bear off the maiden. It is not difficult then to imagine the state of Henry's feelings when he realized the indignity to which he was being submitted. He gnashed his teeth.

For three days more—three diabolic days—he bore his tortured existence at the Country Club. Then there came a picture post-card from Rosalie saying airily—so he construed it—how sorry they were he couldn't be with them and how nice it was to see old Gif again. Mr. Fosdick packed a tiny bag in enormous haste and fled for the train. His head roared and his body seethed with indignation and resentment and loneliness. He had a plan though, a savage, Viking plan.

It was twilight when he arrived at his destination. Speedily circling the station he slunk by devious ways through the grassy lanes of the little settlement, skirting wide the *Sea Flower*. He finally reached the beach. Here he had an idea of concealing himself behind something or other until nightfall when the merry crew would turn up for song and gayety. Then he would majestically discover himself to them all. He, Henry, for whom they had no place in their rotten old shack! Then he'd go alone to the hotel—alone, by thunder!

As he was worming himself secretly along, his eye caught a lonely figure sitting silhouetted against the amber and opal sky. With desperate caution he drew nearer. He wiped the perspiration from his spectacles. It was Rosalie. She was weeping. Mr. Fosdick fairly ran the remaining distance. "Rosy," he cried in anguish, "Rosy—what's the matter?"

"Oh, Henry!"

Mr. Fosdick took her in his arms, and made clucking noises.

"I want to go h-home, Henry," she wailed. "Do you want me?"

"Want you? My goodness! Rosy, you never ought to have left me. A man and his wife ought to be always together, don't you see? You mustn't ever go away without me, darling. I have always said so."

Rosalie raised her tear-dripping eyes. In them was a look of stunned amazement. "But I—" she paused and hid her face on his shoulder. "No, dearie, never," she finished in a little voice. Rosalie was learning the ways of the husband.

"Dearie," he cooed.

"I've had such a horrid time," she whispered.

"Where's that Gif Small?"

"Gif? Oh, you don't know! He's going to marry Felicia."

"Oh, he is, is he?" beamed Mr. Fosdick. "Oh, Gif's not so much of an ass as he looks, Rosy—What are we going to do?"

She shook her head dismally. "Not a bed in the house, Henry. Think of it! My own husband! Oh, dear!"

Mr. Fosdick took out his watch. "Dinner time. Rosy—look here. You and I are going right over to the Ocean Breeze House and have our dinner and stay there, by George. We'll run away. Leave the whole lot of 'em—not say a word. And to-morrow we'll get little Martie and—"

"Henry! Can't we go home?"

"We can and we will."

Hand in hand Mr. and Mrs. Fosdick wandered over the beach toward the haven of the Ocean Breeze. Their hearts beat with a fullness of content like unto the vasty deep at their feet. Mrs. Peterson, with a spy-glass to her eye, gazed after them from the porch of the *Sea Flower*. She laughed boisterously. "I guess he's cured of his 'didoes' all right," she commented.



Miss Maude Adams as  
*Chantecler* in Louis N.  
Parker's English ver-  
sion of Rostand's  
drama

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## CHANTECLER *and* OTHERS by Louis V. De Foe

THE *Cock* has crowed at last! The industrious *Hens* have cackled, the amphibious *Ducks* have quacked, the lordly *Turkey* has gobbled and the vain *Peacock* has spread his tail. *Patou*, the dog of mongrel lineage, has growled in his kennel; the *Hen Pheasant*, belle of the wildwood, has preened her rainbow coat; the *Blackbird*, cynic of the feathered tribe, has cawed his flippant banter and the luminous-eyed *Horned Owls*—Black Hand plotters of the barnyard world—have hatched their dark conspiracies under cover of the night. Thanks to Mr. Charles Frohman, M. Edmond Rostand's "*Chantecler*," about which more nonsense has probably been written than of any other play produced in the last half century, has become familiar to the western world. The suspense is ended and we should be truly grateful.

Let me first sum up the conspicuous merits of the production of this much-heralded allegory of the barnyard. As a fantastical representation of feathered characters not seen in satirical drama

since the time of Aristophanes, it has its peculiar uses. As a fabric of the theatre in an era in which the ordinary material of the stage seems almost exhausted, it is certain to be a success of curiosity. As a spectacle built on a Brobdingnagian scale, it possesses all the elements of the unusual and the picturesque. As a commercial proposition, independent of all considerations of art, it is better than a gilt-edge bond. As a foot-light freak—ah, now I am about to commit a heresy against the poetic gospel of Rostand!—I suggest that my readers go, when opportunity offers, and judge for themselves.

All these merits are to be found in the production. Yet of "*Chantecler*" in its English translation by Mr. Louis N. Parker, plucked of its purely Parisian persiflage for American audiences, other comments equally true must be made. As a work of poetic fancy, literary ingenuity, and social philosophy or satire, expressed in terms of symbolism, it reveals only the slightest traces of the fine qual-



ities which must have distinguished its original metrical version. As a dramatic entertainment, it is unquestionably dull, once the first novelty of its bizarre settings and gorgeous costumes has worn away. The doings of its characters, whether considered as humans or poultry, fail to arouse a real thrill. Even their humor is of the doubtful kind that is evolved from the grotesque. The play, in short, in the form in which it has reached our stage, misses the intention of the poet and the meaning inherent in its original version by so wide a margin that its appeal is chiefly as a spectacular panorama of barnyard scenes—a discouraging disillusionment after the reports of its fine artistic success at the Porte Saint Martin Theatre in Paris not quite a year ago.

The cause of the disappointment in "Chantecler" as a play and the reason of its failure to realize our expectations as a work of art or as a symbolized transcript of life, lie in the absolute unfitness of Miss Maude Adams for the great central rôle upon which its whole significance as a drama depends—the lusty, aggressive, self-sufficient, vain-glorious *Cock*. Why Miss Adams, after her long experience and with a great reputation at stake, should have been tempted into an undertaking for which she is disqualified by her sex, is difficult to comprehend. Her charming femininity which has been the secret of her vast popularity, is an insurmountable barrier to her success

in the feathered play. Almost every element in her personality tends to negative her effort, and her thin, plaintive voice is a travesty of *Chantecler's* deep-chested, sonorous call. Her rooster remains preëminently a hen, even in the disguise of its glistening coat and majestic tail feathers. The necessary illusion of commanding masculinity lies quite beyond her power.

The other actors labor under no such disadvantages. So it is still possible to follow the significance of the poet's lines, and even though they are sometimes clouded, to grasp their philosophical meaning. Since almost every conceivable interpretation has been given to the play's symbolism, let us dismiss all the high-sounding buncombe of its horde of commentators and get at the kernel of "Chantecler" by finding out what it expresses in spectacle and action on its surface.

There is a prologue ingeniously designed to create an atmosphere for the play and kindle the imagination of the audience before the curtain rises. The poet intended that it be spoken by the stage manager but in Mr. Frohman's production, contrary to that design, it is recited by Miss Adams herself. Then the picture of the barnyard comes into view with its wistaria-covered house, dog-kennel, carts, farming implements and general rural paraphernalia, all hugely exaggerated in size to dwarf the stature of the actors. There are fowls of all kinds engaged in the usual traffic of the domestic menagerie, except that they express themselves in the language of humans. The *Cat* dozes lazily on the wall and the voice of *Patou*, the watch dog, is heard in the kennel. Then *Chantecler* struts upon the scene, chanting the "Ode to the Sun" which is one of the poetic glories of the original work. With the *Cock's* arrival, the play is actually under way.



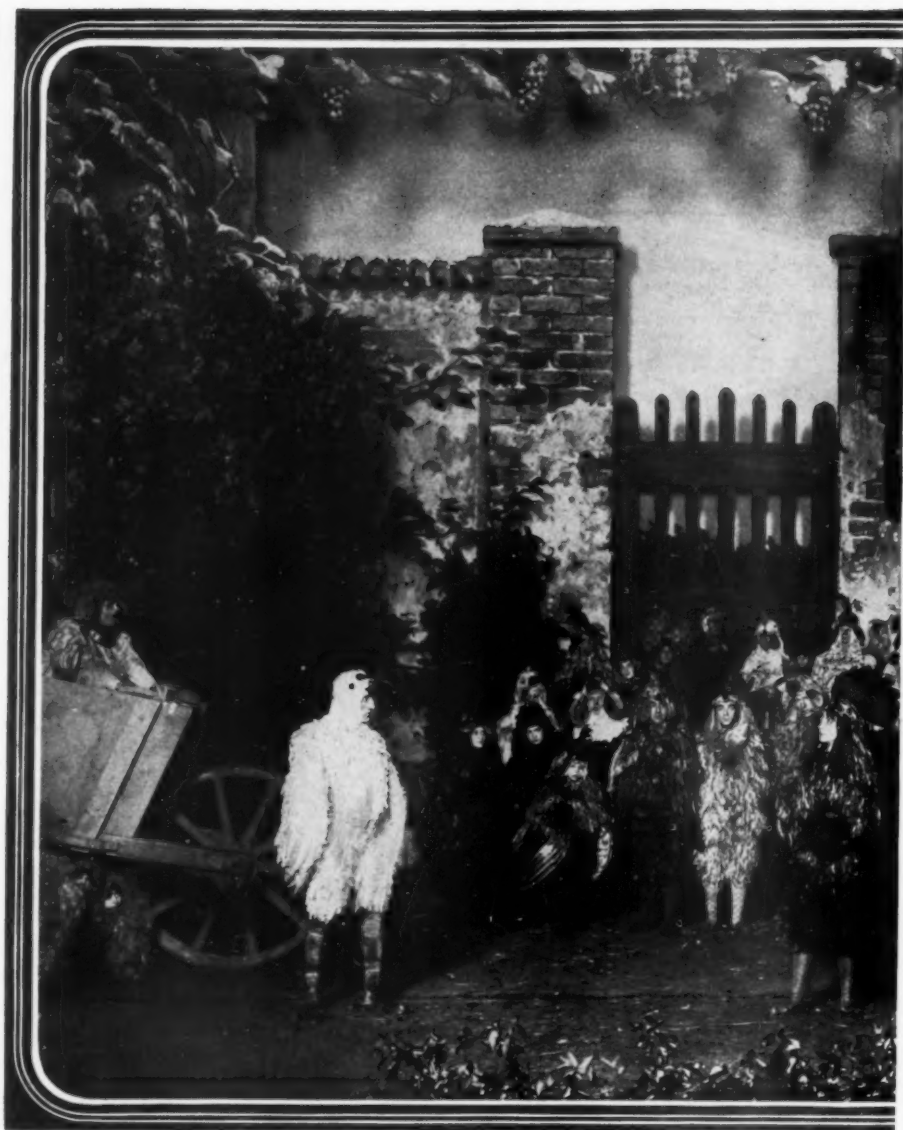
Photograph by White, New York.  
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Miss May Blaney as *Hen Pheasant* in "Chantecler"



Photograph by White, New York. Copyright 1911, by Charles Frohman

Miss Maude Adams as *Chantecler* in Rostand's drama



Photograph by White, New York. Copyright 1911, by Charles Frohman

This, and the other half of the same photograph on the opposite page show

*Chantecler* is the egoist, the idealist, burdened with a great mission in the world and filled with unbounded faith in the importance of his work. Fired with the illusions of youth, he believes it is his vocation to dispel the darkness of the night and make the sun to rise each morning. There are some, the *Blackbird* and the *Turkey* among them, who are skeptical of his powers and amused at his conceited pretensions.

His all-important labor for the day completed, *Chantecler* domineers kindly over the flock and sends his harem of hens and progeny of chicks about their business. But his contentment is ruffled when *Patou*, the dog—a symbol of the plain, honest philosopher—and the *Blackbird*, the shallow, saucy, insincere timeserver and quibbler—the traditional Parisian *boulevardier* among humans—warn him that insidious influences are



the scene in "Chantecler" wherein *Chantecler* challenges the *Game Cock*

working against him. As he listens to their hints, a *Hen Pheasant* that is being pursued by a hunter takes refuge in the barnyard. With her entrance into Chantecler's life, begins the conflict which is to end with his disillusionment and the sad revelation of the humbler direction in which his service to the world really lies. It is clear that Rosstand intends the *Hen Pheasant* to typify the modern woman in all her virtues and

weaknesses, beautiful and high-minded, yet jealous of man's appointed tasks and covetous to monopolize his whole affection and interest. *Chantecler* is attracted by the *Hen Pheasant's* charms, but for the moment he does not become a victim to them.

Now the second act begins. The scene is a hillside overlooking a deep valley. A plot against the *Cock* is being formed by the *Owls*, whose round, luminous eyes





Photograph by White,  
New York  
Edmund Breese as  
*The Devil* and  
in "The Scarecrow"

Miss Alice Fischer  
as *Goody Rickby*

and faintly outlined bodies show through the darkness of the night. They reflect that they are not able to overcome *Chantecler* alone and decide to enlist hired assassins, the aggressive *Game Cocks*, summoned by the *Peacock*, who hates the barnyard monarch. They will humble their victim at the *Guinea Hen's* reception on the morrow. *Chantecler*, disdainful, has at first refused to attend the function, but is gradually yielding under the *Hen Pheasant's* persuasion. But dawn is about to break and in one of the most brilliantly

imagined and most eloquently written passages in the play, *Chantecler* raises his mighty clarion call and brings back the day. Exhausted by his gigantic effort, he falls at the side of the *Hen Pheasant*—who has witnessed the magic of his work with fast increasing admiration. Only the scoffing *Blackbird* presumes to doubt his power.

The third act discloses the reception of the parvenu *Guinea Hen* in a corner of the kitchen garden, made picturesque by the huge vegetables and flowers which encumber the stage. Her application to humans is also easy to detect. She is the snob, the tuft-hunter, the gossiping busybody of the fowls. The guests arrive in all the varieties of the feathered world and the play for a time drifts into social satire, with side flings at fads and follies in literature and art. Meanwhile the *Game Cocks* in bedizened raiment have joined the party, and soon *Chantecler's*



Photograph by White, New York

Miss Fola La Follette as *Rachel Merton*, Frank Reicher as the *Scarecrow* and Earle Brown as *Richard Talbot* in Act III of Percy Mackaye's drama, "*The Scarecrow*"

approach is described by the watchful *Patou*. "Pray, simply announce '*The Cock*,'" he says at the garden gate.

Now comes one of the few strokes of real drama. *Chantecler* makes no attempt to conceal his contempt for the gaudy, aggressive *Game Cocks* who sneer at his airs. An insult is uttered and the White Pyle with the razor spurs, challenges. In a moment the battle is on. *Chantecler* is beaten back. His strength fails. He is about to go down to defeat when an ominous shadow spreads over the throng. It is the dreaded *Hawk*. Instantly the feathered tribe dash to their natural protector. Their faith renews his strength and courage, and when, with the passing of the *Hawk*, the battle is resumed, *Chantecler* is victorious. But he realizes that all his friends except *Patou* have wished to see him humbled. So he listens to the renewed tempting of the *Hen Pheasant* and resolves to go out with her into that wider world from which she came.

This brings the play to the wild, beautiful forest scene of the final act and to *Chantecler's* pathetic disillusionment.

The monarch is now dominated by the jealous *Pheasant*, who will allow him only one song each morning. Yet still the sun rises quite as majestically as before. She taunts him that the *Nightingale's* song is more beautiful than his, and he ruefully admits it. A hunter shoots the *Nightingale*, when lo! another rises to take its place. He even begins to doubt his own omnipotence, and then the *Hen Pheasant* takes his head under her wing and keeps it there until the sun has appeared. And this time he has neglected to crow even once! Disillusioned, crest-fallen, he now is face to face with the tragedy of his life. Yet he will still be strong, he will rise superior to his disillusionment. If he cannot bring the light, he at least can perform the humbler mission of rousing the sleeping world after the day, which is not of his making, shall have dawned. Thus the moral of the play! Find your right place in the economy of life. Be faithful to your conception of duty—even though it be less important than, in your inexperience, you had first believed.

If Miss Adams had impersonated the



Photograph by White, New York

William Faversham as the *Faun* and Miss Julie Opp as *Lady Vancey* in Act II of Edward Knoblauch's comedy, "The Faun"

*Hen Pheasant*, she would have been magnificent. The character seems almost to have been written for her and it is given great prominence in the play. Since she does not, Miss May Blaney performs it entirely satisfactorily. Mr. Ernest Lawford is capital as the scurrilous *Blackbird*. Mr. Arthur Byron scores one of the real successes as *Patou*, the Dog. Mr. R. Peyton Carter is a *Turkey Cock* of artistic perception and high social degree. Miss Dorothy Dorr as the *Guinea Hen* is miscast, for she is twice the size of the *Cock*. Mr. William Lewers is the *Peacock* with the vain airs and spreading tail. There are a score more characters which I need not enumerate, but I must not forget the fluffy chicks and the waddling, tiny ducklings.

"Chantecler," of course, is a great commercial success, but nearly all who see it deplore the fact that Mr. Frohman did not choose Mr. Otis Skinner for the barnyard *Cock* and give Miss Adams a chance really to distinguish herself as the belle of Rostand's fantastical allegory—the rainbow-plumed *Hen Pheasant*.

AFTER Rostand's barnyard, let us continue for a moment on topics of the farm and consider the scarecrow. In so doing we shall still not escape from that form of drama which tells its story by means of symbols. Mr. Percy Mackaye's "tragedy of the ludicrous," as he calls it, is more than a dramatization of the "Feathertop" of Hawthorne in "Mosses From An Old Manse." "The Scarecrow" is, rather, an ethical elaboration of "Feathertop," which begins where the Hawthorne tale ends.

In a much humbler way, "The Scarecrow" is blessed by the same virtues as "Chantecler" and it is also marred by the same faults. It possesses a literary quality that is better appreciated in the library than in the theatre. It conceals within its none too dramatic dialogue a moral against vain-gloriousness and—here the gravest error in the production of "Chantecler" is committed anew—its principal character is entrusted to an actor who is not qualified to embody it.



Photograph by White, New York

William Faversham as the *Faun* in Act I of the comedy of that title

This last defect goes far towards defeating its force and meaning.

The story harks back to the dark days of New England witchcraft. *Goody Rickby*, who is known as *Blacksmith Bess* in the village, is busy early in the morning in her smithy, making a scarecrow to frighten away the crows, when she is visited by *Justice Merton*, her hypocrit-



ical and purse-proud neighbor; he threatens to have her hanged as a witch because she has just sold to his niece, *Rachel*, a "mirror of truth" which possesses the magical power of reflecting all things as they really are. Summoning *Dickon*, her obedient Devil, to her aid out of the forge fire, she prepares a revenge which will also pay up an old grudge she holds against *Justice Merton* for betraying her in her early youth. Together they fashion the scarecrow, providing broomsticks for his legs, flails for his arms, a beet for his heart, a bellows for his lungs and a poker for his conscience and then, finishing him off with a pumpkin for his head, they endow him with life and send him forth, a feeble travesty of a man, as *Lord Ravensbane*, the *Justice's* illegitimate son, to win the love of *Rachel*—who is already betrothed to a prosperous young squire.

*Lord Ravensbane*, who lives by virtue of the pipe which he must smoke continually, is under the tutelage of *Dickon* who now transforms himself into the mannikin's traveling companion and calls himself *Dickonson*. Through the latter's machinations, the straw-stuffed aristocrat not only dismays the *Justice* and wins *Rachel's* affections, but also ends by falling in love with her. A soul is thus gradually born in him and with its growth he comes to a realization of his deficiencies. When his conquest of *Rachel's* heart is complete and he has become the object of admiration of the village, he sees a reflection of himself in the "mirror of truth" and, perceiving that he is only a hideous thing of straw despite his gorgeous dress and courtly graces, he escapes from *Dickonson's* influence, breaks the pipe which gives him life and dies rather than endure self-contempt. But in this renunciation begins his true life, for a final glimpse into the magic mirror, caught in his death throes, reveals that he has become indeed a man.

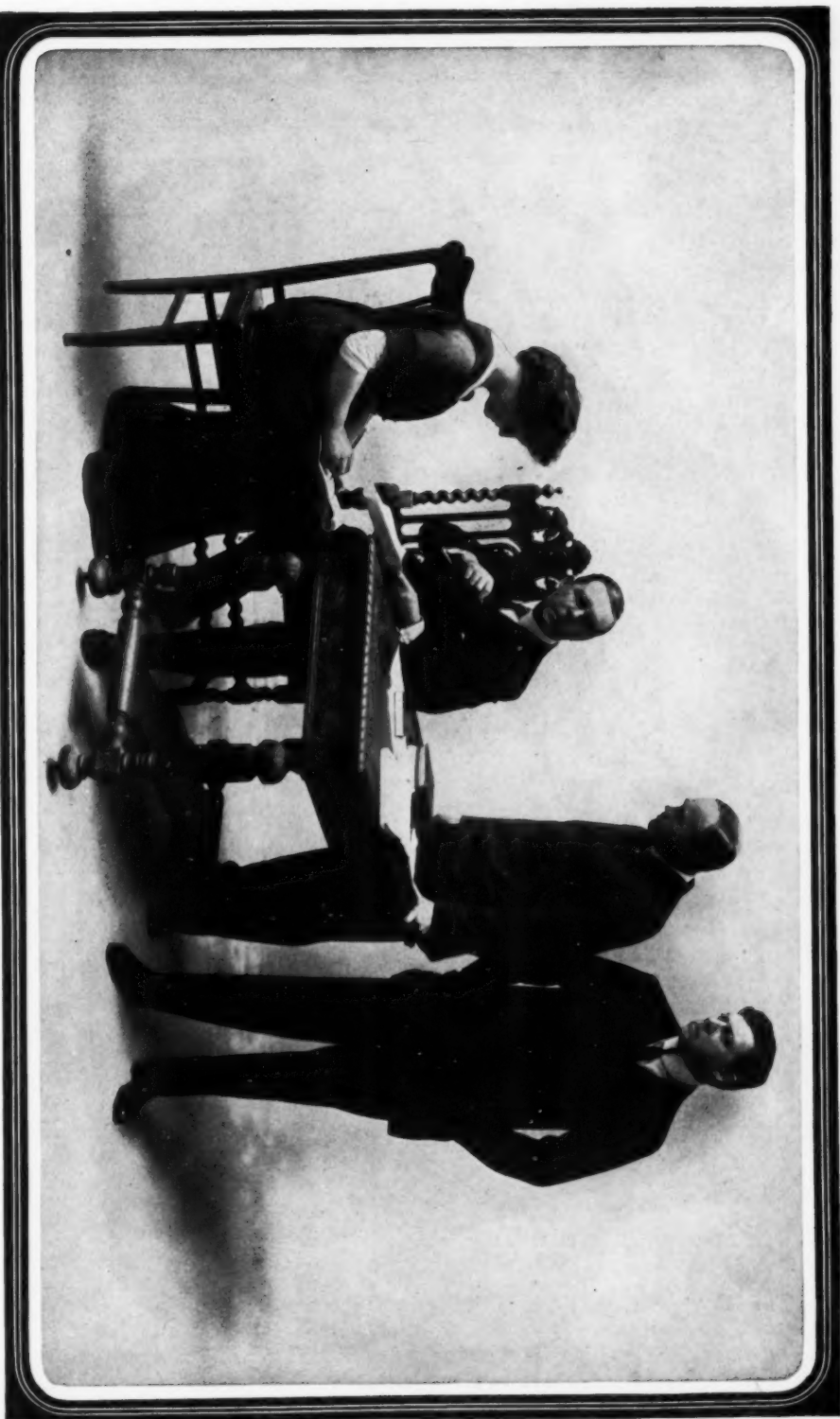
There is, as will be seen, much ingenuity and imagination in the story and there is also, as cannot be detected from this brief description, a pronounced literary quality in the manner in which it is told. If the element of grotesquery predominates in the play, other elements of humor and pathos are also not lack-

ing. The chief defect in it, so far as Mr. Mackaye is concerned, is that the dramatic interest recedes as the moral significance advances—a defect that is dangerous in the theatre, although not of serious consequence in the library.

Mr. Henry B. Harris has been liberal in the manner in which he has produced the play. The solid, picturesque smithy scene in the first act, with its uncanny appurtenances, is very effective and the subsequent scenes give an excellent idea of colonial life in New England in the seventeenth century. But Mr. Harris should have observed equal care in his choice of actors. Mr. Edmund Breese, who impersonates *Dickon*, seems to have been selected with no reference to his fitness for the part. The character is important and bears strongly upon the hidden significance of the story, but Mr. Breese is an unimaginative, melodramatic actor whose notion of a demon has evidently been gained by studying the passes and gestures of some prestidigitator. Surely there is nothing diabolical in his impersonation. But Mr. Frank Reicher's embodiment of the poor, rubbish-stuffed hero is a consummate work of art. Another finely conceived character is the swarthy, sinewy, aggressive *Blacksmith Bess* by Miss Alice Fischer. Mr. Earle Brown as the young *Squire*, Mr. Brigham Royce as the *Justice*, and Mrs. Felix Morris as his sister are others who "get beneath the skin of their parts" and impart an early New England manner to the play. Miss Fola LaFollette as *Rachel Merton* shows no special aptitude for the rôle, although she reads its lines well. The cast contains many others who appear only when Mr. Mackaye attempts to touch with satire the life of early Massachusetts.

**P**ASSING from one riotous fancy of the playwright to another, from *Cocks* and *Hen Pheasants* that speak the language of humans, and a *Scarecrow* that comes to life and falls in love, I am next confronted by a *Faun*. Mr. Edward Knoblauch's satirical comedy of that title, in which Mr. William Faversham as a horned and tailed and infinitely good-natured demi-god penetrates the follies and smoothes the ruffled affairs of

Photograph by White, New York  
Miss Laura Hope Crews as *Kate*; Henry Miller as *Richard Craig*; David Pennell as *Denton*; and Francis Byrne as *Paul Hester* in Henry Sophus Sheldon's play "The Havoc"





Photograph by White, New York

Henry Miller as *Richard Craig*; Francis Byrne as *Paul Hessert* and Miss Laura Hope Crews as *Kate* in  
"The Havoc"

mere mortals, is whimsically amusing and freighted with a good deal of sound sense. It would also be novel in its central idea, if memory did not travel back so easily to "A Messenger From Mars," "The Devil," and sundry other plays in which the stage has looked upon the world and the trafficking of men through eyes unspoiled by convention. This comedy, nevertheless, stands a little apart from the ones I have just mentioned. It contains many clever elements peculiar to itself, but it would be more entertaining if the main idea were not so long drawn out and if its satire were more applicable to our ways than to England's.

*Lord Stonbury*, an English racing baronet, is bankrupt and about to commit suicide when a hairy and all but unclothed *Faun* awakes from his slumber

in a vase of geraniums and darts to his rescue. The demi-god, being anxious to walk for a time in the paths of mortals, proposes to give the baronet the benefit of tips gleaned from his friends, the horses, providing that, in return, he be provided with a suit of clothes and introduced into London society. *Lord Stonbury* is skeptical of the supernatural nature of his visitor until, by way of experiment, he shoots a bullet through the *Faun* which does no more damage than to shatter a lamp before which he is standing.

The *Faun* at first does not take kindly to the raiment of man. In other words, his clothes make him itch and he shocks *Lady Alexandra Vancey* by scratching himself whenever the notion seizes him. He also cannot get out of the faun-like habit of sitting cross-legged on the table

when communing with bees, humming-birds and thunderbolts. He has an uncomfortable way of seeing all things literally and frankly speaking his mind on all subjects. One topic which he is especially slow to grasp is Woman's Suffrage—of which *Lady Vancey* is a militant oracle. It is the constant reiteration of this interest which betrays that the play was intended especially for London audiences.

The *Faun* also cannot comprehend the

prevailing views of matrimony. He perceives that young couples deeply in love are kept apart and that cold hearts are often fettered together. He marvels that generous natures are allowed to be stifled and that evil designs are permitted to succeed. As he controls all the elements and can bend the inanimate world to his bidding, he sets out to adjust all these matters to a god-like principle. So in the course of three acts, he contrives to arouse human emotions in hitherto unfeeling people, to bring together hearts that have been torn apart, and to rescue *Lord Stonbury* from the grip of the money-lenders and restore his lost fortune. But during this process he also learns that the life of fauns has many advantages over that of humans, so at the end of the play he disappears over the garden wall, tosses back his borrowed raiment and escapes to the cool woodland and the sun-bathed fields which are his natural homes.

Mr. Faversham is exceedingly buoyant and spontaneous as the *Faun*. It is his artistic contribution which has carried Mr. Knoblauch's play to whatever success it has attained. Miss Julie Opp



Lew Fields as *Henry Peck* shaves Vernon Castle as *Zoune* in "*The Hen-Pecks*"

Photograph by Hall, New York



is always handsome and sometimes earnest as the suffrage enthusiast, but surely the *Faun's* own eyes deceive him when he calls her his "little green grape." If she be a grape at all, she is of the hothouse variety and of huge proportions. Mr. Martin Sabine is the racing baronet who is down on his luck. Mr. Harry Redding and Miss Elsie Oldham impersonate the young lovers, while Mr. Albert Gran appears as an old King's Counsellor who discovers that his heart is still young.

**T**HERE is no live stock, natural or supernatural, in Mr. H. S. Sheldon's play, "The Havoc," to which Mr. Henry Miller is devoting his fine talents not only as an actor but as a producer this season, and which came to New York heralded as a very unusual accomplishment by a writer who is a mere tyro of the dramatic pen. If it has disclosed itself to be not quite so remarkable as had been anticipated, it is, nevertheless, somewhat superior to the average quality of the chance material of the stage, and it is proving its ability to survive on Broadway.

I know nothing of Mr. Sheldon's aims or anticipations as a playwright, but I surmise that he at one time or another has prescribed for himself an arduous diet of Ibsen food without having the proper digestive apparatus to assimilate it. In most new writers such a course superinduces nightmare; in Mr. Sheldon's it has led to nothing worse than a fantastic dream. With a saving sense of humor on its author's part, "The Havoc," which is deadly serious in its present form—might have resulted in a really capital farce. That it is accepted by audiences as Mr. Sheldon intends, is due less to the play itself than to the very excellent way in which it is performed.

The doctrine of individualism is the theme of "The Havoc," but the conclusion which is reached is opposed to that theory. *Richard Craig*, a railroad official of some importance, and his wife *Kate*, have as their boarder *Paul Hessert*, an employee in his office who harbors notions somewhat similar to the vagaries of the poet, *Eugene Marchbank*, in Mr. Bernard Shaw's "Candida." These are

practically the only characters. You see how the land lies almost at the moment when the curtain goes up, and you marvel that the husband is not equally observant. But if he were, there would be no play, of course. You know what to expect and again you are not mistaken. *Craig* sets out for Chicago but returns suddenly and surprises his boarder in *Kate's* rooms.

A man of *Craig's* fiber would have kicked his faithless star boarder into the street. Not so, however, according to Mr. Sheldon's reasoning. He causes the husband to parley and give *Hessert* a chance to expound at great length his philosophical formula of individualism. It is that the human heart goeth where it listeth and that no mere formal considerations of matrimony can change its inevitable course. He has fastidious objections to the conventional encounter between husband and rival, especially if it involves a pistol, and points out how futile it will be for *Craig* to attempt to hold his wife against her will.

With all these arguments *Craig* considerably agrees. He promises to depart for Chicago—actually this time—and remain away long enough for his wife to obtain a divorce, stipulating only that when he returns, his position and *Hessert's* shall be exactly reversed—that he shall become the star boarder in the *Hessert* household. The bargain is struck, and a new deal of the matrimonial cards is made.

In the succeeding act *Hessert* and *Kate*—now *Mrs. Hessert*—begin to realize after a year's experience that the philosophy of individualism is more interesting to those who do not practice it than to those who do. *Hessert* has not only plunged into drinking, gambling and dishonesty, but he has acquired the domestic weakness of petulant suspiciousness and gnawing jealousy. When he returns to his house unexpectedly late at night, he discovers *Craig* on the balcony. Although his wife quite honestly denies all knowledge of the boarder's presence there, and *Craig* himself strongly protests that he has no intention of wrong doing, *Hessert* deserts his theories of individualism and raises the conventional row.

The final scene removes the tension



Photograph by Hall, New York  
 Miss Lillian Lee, Lew Fields, Miss Gertrude Quinlan, Vernon Castle, Miss Ethel Johnson, Laurence Wheat, Edith Frost, Stephen Maley and Blossom Seeley, who  
 comprise the principals in "The Hen-Pecks," Lew Fields' new musical comedy

and lets the play down easily, so to speak. *Hessert's* speculations are discovered and he is put in charge of a detective commissioned to conduct him out of range of the law. *Mrs. Hessert* becomes the railroad man's stenographer in order to support her child and the inference is that she may some day become *Mrs. Craig* again. Of course this conclusion, taking into consideration *Craig's* character, is quite preposterous, but it is no more improbable than the preceding circumstances of the play. The whole fabric argues a theory rather than represents plausible or even conceivable conditions in life.

No fault is to be found with the acting. Mr. Miller is deadly serious as *Craig* and Mr. Francis Byrne represents clearly the warped mental nature of *Paul Hessert*. Miss Laura Hope Crews succeeds in making quite plausible the character of—whom shall I say, *Mrs. Craig* or *Mrs. Hessert*? I do not fancy Mr. Sheldon's play, but I at least give it the credit of containing an idea—which is something in a day when most plays are mere idea-less pot boilers.

As an epilogue to these sketches of the most notable of the month's new plays, we may as well revert to the topic with which we began—the stage's near poultry. Mr. Lew Field's "The Hen-Pecks" is the "Chantecler" of all the recent musical shows, even at a time when musical comedy of its slap-dash kind is gradually giving way in favor of more formal and orderly operettas. It also opens with a barnyard scene not a whit less realistic than M. Rostand's highly symbolized affair. But it doesn't cling long to the rural haunts, for Mr. Field, though he can wear a chip-straw hat as naturally as any back-country farmer, is most at home in his fun-making amid scenes of the White Light district of the seaboard metropolis.

According to Mr. Glen MacDonough's new libretto, Mr. Fields is now a barber turned farmer who goes back to his old profession in order to be revenged upon a traveling magician who, by his lux-

uriant growth of golden hair, has enticed the favorite daughter of *Henry Peck* away from the placid confines of the farm to a career on the stage. *Peck's* desire is to cut off the magician's golden locks and thus remove his dazzling charms.

This is about as far as the plot gets, but the incidents that follow are interminable and the fun is incessant. The scene in which Fields lures his victim into a barber chair and gives him a shave, haircut, massage and shampoo, winding up by singeing his hair and burying him under sizzling hot towels, is funnier by half even than the scene at the soda fountain in "The Girl Behind The Counter"—and that has heretofore been regarded as the comedian's most comical feat.

The realistic way in which this musical comedy is staged will make a visit to it, when it takes the road many months hence, almost as good as an evening actually spent on Broadway. One scene showing Times Square with its brilliantly illuminated buildings and its dense sidewalk throng is so natural that it gives the audience a real thrill—and thrills, it must be remembered, are not common in musical comedies.

For extravagant outlay the piece is a full step ahead of "The Midnight Sons" and "The Jolly Bachelors." Musically it is commonplace, but so much zest is put into the tinkling numbers which Mr. A. Baldwin Sloane has composed, by such clever performers as Mr. Fields, Mr. Vernon Castle, Miss Gertrude Quinlan, Miss Lillian Lee, Miss Blossom Seeley, Miss Ethel Johnson, Mr. Laurence Wheat and a score more principals in addition to a chorus numbering one hundred, that the piece is not endangered on that account.

The settings represent *Henry Peck's* farm, a country railroad station, a fully equipped New York barber shop, the Times Square scene already described, a railroad lunch counter and the court of a sky scraper apartment house—and all are on the same realistically massive scale.



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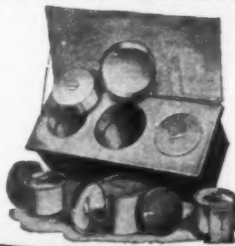
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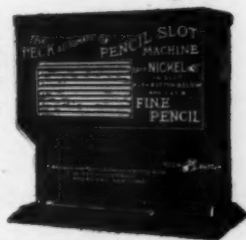
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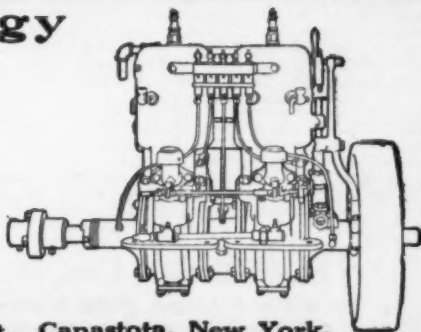
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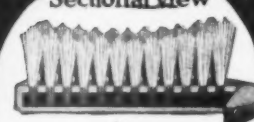


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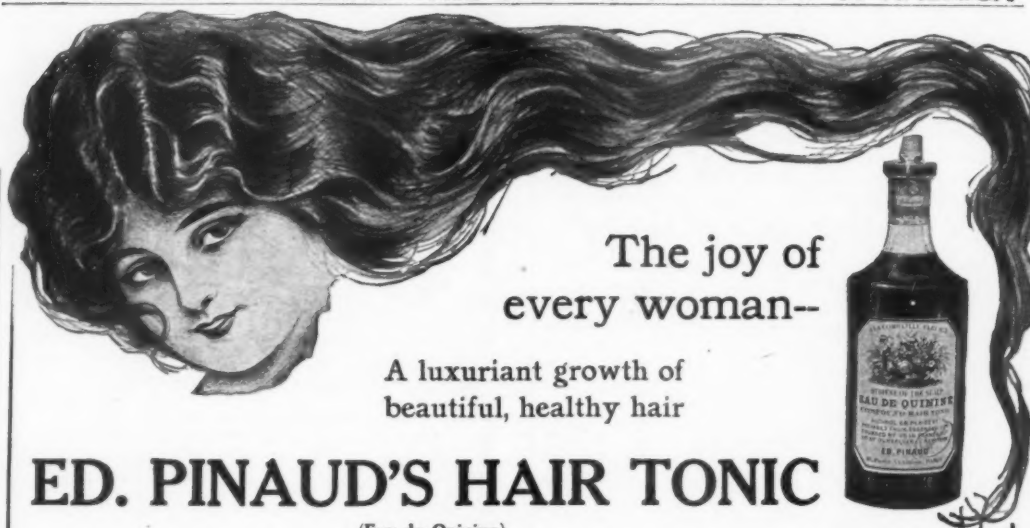
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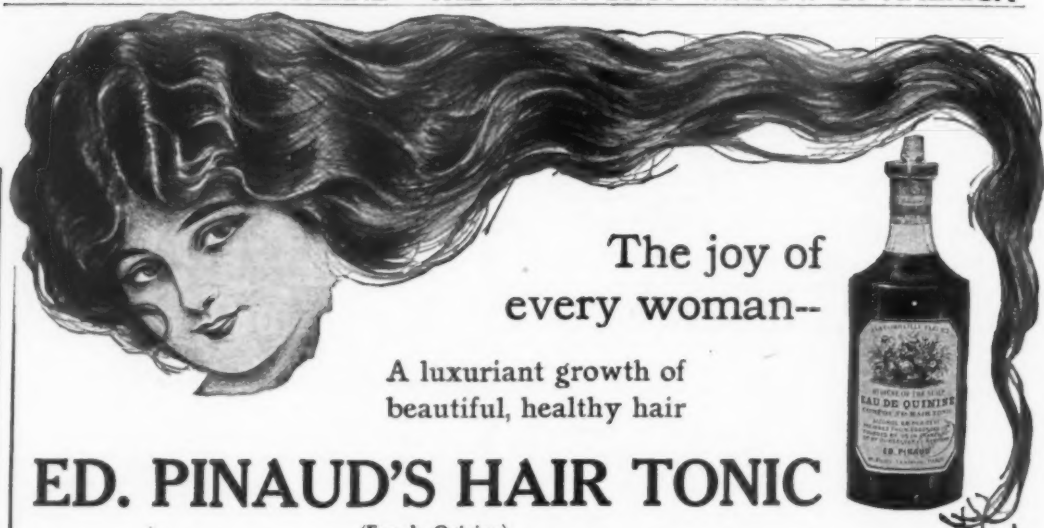
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The HOWARD is the closest rating watch in the world—and worth all it costs to any man of accurate habit and orderly mind.

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Not every jeweler can sell you a HOWARD Watch. Find the HOWARD jeweler in your town and talk to him. He is a good man to know. Drop us a postal card, Dept. E, and we will send you "The Story of Edward Howard and the First American Watch"—an inspiring chapter of history that every man and boy should read.

**E. HOWARD WATCH WORKS, Boston, Mass.**

Madam—

No matter what you have decided to serve for luncheon or dinner, do not fail to add Nabisco Sugar Wafers for dessert.

These dessert confections are so tempting and inviting that they not only make a good meal better, but oftentimes save a poor one.

Always fresh and delightful in flavor.

***In ten-cent tins***

Also in twenty-five cent tins

CHOCOLATE TOKENS—similar to NABISCO, but with a delicious outer shell of rich chocolate.



NATIONAL BISCUIT COMPANY

**"All through the life of a feeble-bodied man his path is lined with memory's grave-stones which mark the spot where noble enterprises perished for lack of physical vigor to embody them in deeds"—Horace Mann.**

# **Grape-Nuts**

## **FOOD**

scientifically meets Nature's demand for the necessary food elements, in proper balance.

Its rich nourishment is in concentrated, partly pre-digested form, supplying the vigor and endurance necessary for the accomplishment of one's life purposes.

**"There's a Reason"**

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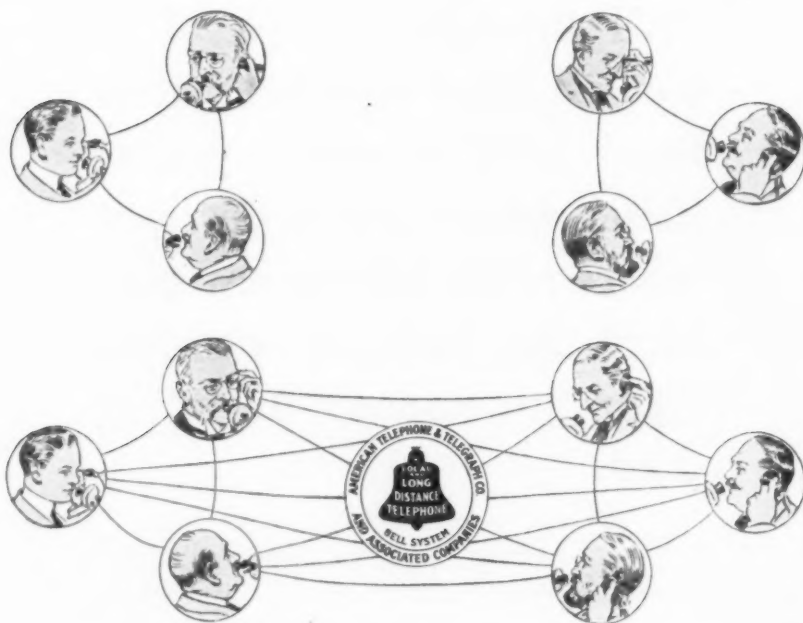
Postum Cereal Company, Ltd., Battle Creek, Michigan, U. S. A.

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Canadian Postum Cereal Co., Limited, Windsor, Ontario.



# Union Increases Use



When two groups of telephone subscribers are joined together the usefulness of each telephone is increased.

Take the simplest case — two groups, each with three subscribers. As separate groups there are possible only six combinations—only six lines of communication. Unite these same two groups, and instead of only six, there will be fifteen lines of communication.

No matter how the groups are located or how they are connected by exchanges, combination in-

creases the usefulness of each telephone, it multiplies traffic, it expands trade.

The increase is in accordance with the mathematical rule. If two groups of a thousand each are united, there will be a million more lines of communication.

No one subscriber can use all of these increased possibilities, but each subscriber uses some of them.

Many groups of telephone subscribers have been united in the Bell System to increase the usefulness of each telephone, and meet the public demand for universal service.

**AMERICAN TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY  
AND ASSOCIATED COMPANIES**

***One Policy***

***One System***

***Universal Service***

# Look before you lease

The old adage, "look before you leap" now reads, "look before you lease." A poorly heated building is no renting (or sales) bargain at any price—because no house is really worth living in without plenty of clean, healthful, invigorating warmth. That is why

## AMERICAN & IDEAL RADIATORS & BOILERS

are proving in many thousands of buildings, of all classes, in America and

Europe, to be the greatest boon of the century in utmost betterment of living conditions, as well as in *reducing the cost of living*.

IDEAL Boilers and AMERICAN Radiators bring *freedom* from the back-breaking work, ash-dust and poisonous coal-gases which attend the use of old-style heating devices. At the same time, an outfit of IDEAL Boilers and AMERICAN Radiators will prove to be a dividend-paying investment to you—far better than bonds at 6%—as in a few years the outfit saves enough in coal and cleaning, time and temper, no

rusting or repairs, to quickly repay the original cost. Any owner, architect or real estate agent will tell you that IDEAL Boilers and AMERICAN Radiators will attract and hold best tenants at 10% to 15% higher rental; or assist to sell the property quicker, at full price paid for the outfit.



A No. 3015 IDEAL Boiler and 175 ft. of 38-in. AMERICAN Radiators, costing the owner \$125, were used to heat this cottage.



A No. 3-22 IDEAL Boiler and 400 ft. of 38-in. AMERICAN Radiators, costing the owner \$215, were used to heat this cottage.

At these prices the goods can be bought of any reputable, competent fitter. This did not include cost of labor, pipe, valves, freight, etc., which installation is extra and varies according to climatic and other conditions.

Whether landlord, tenant, or intending builder, whether your building is OLD or new, FARM or city, it will pay you well to LOOK INTO the merits of IDEAL Boilers and AMERICAN Radiators. Tell us of the building you wish to heat. Our information and catalog (free) put you under no obligation to buy. Prices are now most favorable.

Write today.

Public Showrooms  
in all large cities

## AMERICAN RADIATOR COMPANY

Write to Dept. A35  
Chicago



# AGENTS STOP RIGHT HERE LISTEN

SOMETHING NEW

Sells on sight. No experience necessary. Send your name and address today for free information. Phenomenal opportunity to make money. We want Agents, General Agents and Managers in every county. Anyone can do the work 100% PROFIT TO AGENT. No charge for territory. You will earn

## \$45.00 TO \$90.00 A WEEK

easily at the very beginning. Grand free advertising special introductory plan for agents on the most sensational selling article of the age. Every man a buyer—quick. Every call a sale. Success is yours. Money in abundance is coming to you. Independence—pleasant position—luxuries—a start in real life—SUCCESS.

One man (Hiram Purdy) took 27 orders the first day out (sworn statement); profit \$40.50. 26 orders next day. Once our agent, always a money maker. Get out of the rut. Send for absolute proof. Young men, old men, farmers, teachers, carpenters, students, bank clerks—everybody makes money.

**LISTEN TO SUCCESS:** Read these reports. J. J. Green started selling in Louisiana and became General Agent controlling extensive territory. At a single time he ordered 50 agents' outfits. Land Office business right off the jump. Orders everywhere. A. M. Clark of Kansas, wrote, "I was out of town the other day—did not go with the intention of doing any soliciting. Just got to talking and sold 6 before I knew it." Profit \$9.00. Brand new business for agents. Sales roll up everywhere.

## 400,000 IN 4 MONTHS

**JUST THINK OF THIS!** A positive automatic razor stropper—absolutely guaranteed. Here at last. The thing all men have dreamed about. Inventor's genius creates the marvelous IMPROVED NEVER FAIL—perfect in every detail, under every test. With it you can instantly sharpen to a keen, smooth, velvety edge any razor—old style or safety—all the same. Handles any and every blade automatically. Few seconds with the IMPROVED NEVER FAIL puts a razor in better shape to give a soothing, cooling, satisfying shave than can an expert hand operator in 30 minutes. New idea. Works great. Makes friends everywhere. Sells itself. Men are all excited over this little wonder machine—over its mysterious accuracy and perfection. Eager to buy. Agents coining money. Fields untouched. Get territory at once. We want a thousand Agents General Agents, Salesmen and Managers. ACT TODAY EXCLUSIVE TERRITORY.



**SEND NO MONEY.** Just your name and address on a postal card and we will mail complete information, details, and sworn-to proof FREE. Don't delay. Territory is going fast. Give name of county. Write today. Address,

**THE NEVER FAIL COMPANY, 965 COLTON BUILDING, Toledo, Ohio**

## How to End Corns in Two Days

Just apply a Blue-jay plaster. It is done in a jiffy. The pain stops instantly. Then the bit of B & B wax gently loosens the corn. In two days it comes out.

No soreness, no pain—no trouble at all. You simply forget the corn. That's how five million corns are removed every year by this wonderful little plaster. And that is why Blue-jay outsells all other corn treatments full fifty times over. Just try one. You will never again let yourself suffer from corns.

### See the Picture

- |                                                                     |                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| A is the harmless red B & B wax which loosens the corn.             | C is the comfortable narrow band which goes around the toe. |
| B is soft felt to protect the corn and keep the wax from spreading. | D is rubber adhesive. It fastens the plaster on.            |

## Blue-jay Corn Plasters

At All Druggists 15c and 25c per Package

Sample Mailed Free. Also Blue-jay Bunion Plasters.

Bauer & Black, Chicago and New York, Makers of Surgical Dressings, etc.

(103)

## Tire Bills Cut in Two



No-Rim-Cut Tire



Ordinary Clincher Tire

**Goodyear No-Rim-Cut — Goodyear oversize tires—under average conditions cut tire bills in two.**

**And that saving is clear. These patented tires now cost nothing extra. Our multiplied output—\$8,500,000 last year—has cut the cost of production.**

### **No Rim-Cutting**

Half of the saving comes in avoidance of rim-cutting. The two pictures above show you how this is done. Both tires are shown fitted in the same rim—the standard rim used for quick-detachable tires. Also for demountable rims.

The left picture shows how the removable rim flanges are set to curve outward with No-Rim-Cut tires. The tire comes against a rounded edge, and rim-cutting is made impossible.

We have sold half a million No-Rim-Cut tires. We have run them flat in a hundred tests—as far as 20 miles. In all this experience there has never been an instance of rim-cutting.

The picture at right shows how ordinary tires—clincher tires—are fitted to this same standard rim. The movable rim flanges must be set to curve inward—to grasp hold of the hook in the tire. That is how the tires are held on.

Note how the hook of the flange then digs into the tire. That is what causes rim-cutting. A punctured

tire may be ruined beyond repair by running a single block.

Hooks are not needed with Goodyear No-Rim-Cut tires. Not even tire bolts are needed. The tire stays on because 126 braided wires are vulcanized into the base. They make the tire base unstretchable so nothing can ever force it over the flange.

When the tire is inflated the braided wires contract. The tire is then held to the rim by a pressure of 134 pounds to the inch.

This braided wire feature—which we control—forms the only practical way to make a hookless tire. A hard rubber base won't do—a single wire won't do. The braided wires which contract under air pressure are essential to safety.

### **10% Oversize**

Goodyear No-Rim-Cut tires are made 10 per cent wider than rated size. That means 10 per cent more tire—more carrying capacity—without any extra cost. That adds on the average 25 per cent to the tire mileage—saves 25 per cent of tire cost.

Tires are overloaded nine cases in ten. The tire size is not sufficient to take care of the extras—the top, glass front, gas tank, extra tire, etc. The result is a blow-out long before the tire is worn out.

This extra size, which we give you free, takes care of the extra weight. You get all these advantages without extra cost when you specify Goodyear No-Rim-Cut tires. Our Tire Book is mailed free.

**GOOD YEAR**

**No-Rim-Cut Tires**

*With or Without Non-Skid Tread*

**THE GOODYEAR TIRE & RUBBER COMPANY, 78th Street, AKRON, OHIO**

*Branches and Agencies in All the Principal Cities*

**Canadian Factory—Bowmanville, Ontario**

**(225)**

**Main Canadian Office—Toronto, Ontario**

*We Make All Sorts of Rubber Tires*

In writing to advertisers it is of advantage to mention THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE





## "Onyx" Hosiery



"ONYX" stamped on a hose means—

### THE MAKER'S BEST EFFORT— THE BUYER'S BEST JUDGMENT.

These two sentences state the simple truth and explain the "ONYX" Success.

Our best efforts, extending over twenty-five years, have produced the "ONYX" Quality which appeals to your Best Judgment.

Do not attempt the impossible; better hose cannot be found than those which bear the "ONYX" Trade-Mark.

We describe below a few "ONYX" Qualities which will please you.

**990 S.** The New "Chiffon Hose"—Women's "ONYX" Sheerest Gauze Lisle—Black, Tan and White with "DUB-L TOP" and "DOUBLEX" splicing at heel and toe. Just what its name implies. **50c. per pair.**

**409 K.** Women's "ONYX" "DUB-L TOP" Black, White and Tan Silk Lisle with "DOUBLEX" Splicing at Heel and Toe; feels and looks like silk; wears better. **50c. per pair.**  
**409 G.** The Gauze weight of this celebrated number with all its merits. **50c. per pair.**

#### OUT-SIZE HOSE

**170 S.** Women's "ONYX" Gauze Lisle "DUB-L TOP" Black, White, Pink, Tan, Cardinal, Sky, Navy, Violet. "DOUBLEX" splicing at heel and toe. **60c. per pair.**

#### SILK HOSE FOR WOMEN

**100.** Women's "ONYX" Pure Thread Silk—the extraordinary value—best made in America—every possible shade or color—Black, White, Tan, Gold, Copenhagen Blue, Wistaria, Amethyst, Taupe, Bronze, American Beauty, Fougere—all colors to match shoe or gown. Every pair guaranteed. **\$2.25 per pair.**

#### FOR MEN

**E 325.** Men's "ONYX" Black and Colored Silklisle, double sole, spliced heel. "The Satisfactory Hose." **60c. per pair.**

Sold at the quality shops. If your dealer cannot supply you, we will direct you to the nearest dealer or send postpaid any number desired. Write to Dept. V.

# Lord & Taylor

Wholesale Distributors

New York

## Kuyler's pure COCOA BUTTER



10 CENT TINS.



SOLD BY DRUGGISTS EVERYWHERE  
OR SENT FREE UPON RECEIPT OF PRICE BY

Kuyler's 18th St. & Irving Place,  
NEW YORK CITY.

## FREE Trial Full Size

\$1.00 Box

Sent You Prepaid

## Nurbell OXYGEN Face Powder



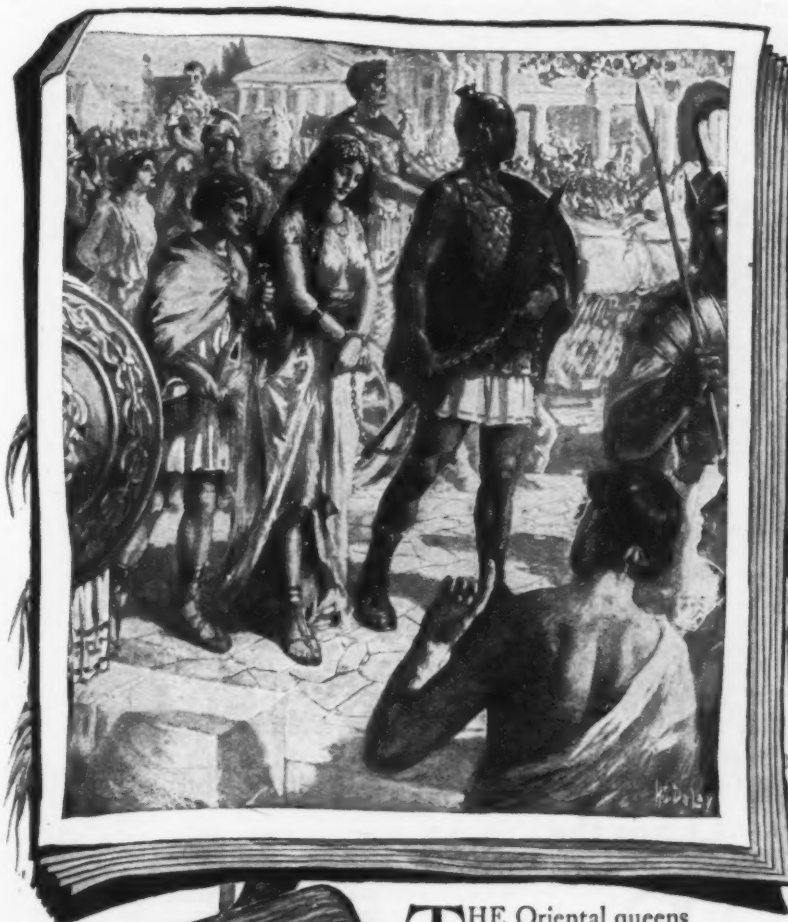
The largest, finest, full-sized \$1.00 box of the best face powder known, sent on approval—not one penny down. Take it and try it one week entirely at our expense. If it proves satisfactory, remit 50c, and the dollar's worth is yours. If not satisfied, return what you have not used and pay nothing.

Thousands are ordering the new face powder under this remarkable introductory offer.

This is our way of proving the difference between Nurbell's Face Powder, which enables the skin to breathe by means of oxygen-bearing properties, and old-fashioned cheap powders made of chalk, injurious to the skin, unsightly and fatal to the complexion. Oxygen is the only natural beautifier in the world. Artificial beautifiers cannot produce natural beauty.

Most face powders coat the skin and fill the pores, thus keeping out fresh air which contains oxygen necessary to feed cells. Nurbell Oxygenated Face Powder is peculiarly compounded so that it holds and carries beautifying oxygen in proper form until, on contact with the skin, nascent oxygen is liberated—100 times its own volume. It clears, purifies, beautifies, Deodorizes and absorbs perspiration. So soft, fine, light and delicately tinted that it conceals defects of complexion and yet doesn't show that anything has been put on face. Blends perfectly and adheres so closely that it cannot blow off or become spotty. Delightfully perfumed. Best for brunettes—best for blondes. Four tints—Flesh, Pink, Cream and White. Remember, not one penny in advance—no receipts or papers—we take all the risk. A post card will do—just your name and where to send it. Mention tint wanted.

THE MORLAN-SPICER CO., 923 Caxton Building, Cleveland, Ohio.



*Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra, Arabia, was captured in 273 A.D. by the Roman Emperor Aurelian, who besieged Palmyra and utterly destroyed it. The picture shows her being marched in chains in the triumphal procession of Aurelian into Rome.*



Price  
50c



Price  
15c

**T**HE Oriental queens were noted for their beauty.

Zenobia, especially, was famed for hers. She, like others, daily used both palm and olive oils to whiten, soften and invigorate the skin.

Much of her beauty came from her great care in this respect.

You can add to your good looks in a like effective manner by using—every day—**Palmolive Soap**—the modern combination of these Oriental oils.

It soothes, cleanses, beautifies and fills the air about with a faint, alluring Oriental perfume.

Supplement Palmolive Soap with **Palmolive Cream**, a product no less dainty or less good. The two together never fail to make complexions perfect. Don't go without them longer.

Dealers, everywhere, sell both.

*Send us twelve 2-cent stamps and the band from the Palmolive Cream carton and we'll send you a set of six beautiful artist's proofs, size 11½x14½ (ready for framing), made from original paintings in oil, portraying several historically famous Oriental queens.*

(145)

**B. J. Johnson Soap Co., 408 Fowler St., Milwaukee, Wis.**

Cawston California Ostrich Feathers are Superior to all Others

# Cawston Ostrich Feather Souvenir Catalogue and Price List

SENT FREE ON REQUEST

Ostrich feathers are very fashionable again this spring—all the craze in Paris. When you buy a plume you will be so much better pleased if it is a Cawston feather from California. Captured seven first prizes at world's expositions in competition with African and all other feathers.

Our Illustrated Catalogue tells how you can buy ostrich feathers direct from the producer without having to pay import duty or middlemen's profits, and how you can get your old feathers dyed and recurled or made over into the beautiful new willow.

Write today for a copy

## Cawston Ostrich Farm

P. O. Box 98

South Pasadena, California

Established 1886—a Quarter of a Century Achievement



**Saves the Gums,  
Cleans the  
Teeth**

*"A Clean Tooth  
Never Decays"*

This flexible curved handle instantly adjusts itself to the shape of the gums, passing over them gently but firmly.

Every  
Pro-phy-lac-tic  
fully guaranteed.  
We replace if  
defective.

## Pro-phy-lac-tic

### Flexible Handle Tooth Brush

It gives a new sensation and preserves the gums—keeps them in a healthful condition.

The Pro-phy-lac-tic (rigid or flexible handle) thoroughly cleans all the teeth back and front alike.

It's the one tooth brush with a well defined purpose. Packed in an individual yellow box which protects against handling before the brush gets to you.

Prices: 25c., 35c., 40c.

Our interesting booklet "Do you Clean or Brush Your Teeth?" is yours for the asking, send for it.

Florence Mfg. Co., 196 Pine St., Florence, Mass.  
Sole makers of Pro-phy-lac-tic Tooth, Hair, Military and Hand Brushes.

## Greider's Fine Catalogue

of purebred poultry, for 1911, over 200 pages, 57 large colored pictures of fowls, calendar for each month, illustrations, descriptions, photos, incubators, brooders, information, and all details concerning the business, where and how to buy fine poultry, eggs for hatching, supplies, etc. at lowest cost, in fact the greatest poultry catalogue ever published. Send 15c for this handsome book. B. H. GREIDER, Box 27, REEDS, PA.



## FRECKLES IT IS EASY TO REMOVE THEM

For years I tried every known remedy without success. Skin specialists and doctors said I would take them to the grave. I fooled them all.

I cured myself by a simple discovery. I will send you the prescription free if you will write for it. It took off my freckles and the freckles of thousands of others. It will remove yours. It will clear the worst complexion. Write today. Address Mrs. E. C. White, P. O. Box 44, Dept. No. 10A, Buffalo, N. Y.

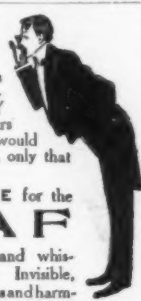
## "DON'T SHOUT"




"I hear you. I can hear now as well as anybody. 'How?' Oh, something new—THE MORLEY PHONE. I've a pair in my ears now, but they are invisible. I would not know I had them in, myself, only that I hear all right."

## The MORLEY PHONE for the DEAF

makes low sounds and whispers plainly heard. Invisible, comfortable, weightless and harmless. Anyone can adjust it.



Over one hundred thousand sold. Write for booklet and testimonials. THE MORLEY CO., Dept. 766, Perry Bldg., Phila.



## Clean and Fluffy again

Not until you have a shampoo with Canthrox will you know the supreme satisfaction that accompanies perfect shampooing. Its rich, abundant lather leaves the scalp immaculately clean and the hair delightfully fresh, fluffy and easy to do up.

## Canthrox Shampoo

is different from ordinary shampoos. It is easy to prepare, agreeable to use, and dries quickly and evenly—with never a streak of uneven color in the hair.

Canthrox removes dust, excessive oil and dandruff—allays itching—and leaves the scalp sweet, clean, pliant and healthy—in just that condition most encouraging to the growth of beautiful hair.

**50c for 15 Shampoos**

**Trial Offer:** We have such confidence that Canthrox will please you that upon receipt of your name and address, and a 2-cent stamp to pay postage, we will send you sufficient Canthrox for a shampoo, so that you can try it at our expense.

**H. S. PETERSON & CO.**

262 Kinzie Street

Chicago, Illinois

*If asked for, Canthrox shampoos are given in many first-class Hair Dressing and Shampoo Parlors.*



In writing to advertisers it is of advantage to mention THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE





If a man dispute you,  
fill his pipe with "Velvet."



"Velvet" is intended to be so good that one box will secure your life-long friendship. The dominant idea of the makers has been to get special selections of Burley tobacco and age it to the highest perfection. Two years has seen this tobacco mellowing under the finest conditions—that's the true way to kill the "bite"—develop smoothness and flavor. "Velvet" has proven a puffing success—do thou likewise. 10c at all dealers.

*Velvet should be on every dealer's shelf — IF OUT, send us loc. for the regular tin — sent only in United States.*

SPAULDING & MERRICK  
Chicago, Ill.



## The Natural Desire of Man

is to live as long and as well as possible and to attain the highest degree of efficiency. Nothing is more conducive to that end than

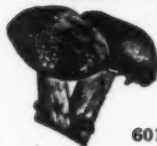
# Evans' Ale

It fosters that exquisite poise of character called serenity, so essential to longevity by promoting the working harmony of foods upon which assimilation and perfect digestion depend—its natural ingredients act as opposing elements to bring out the best in food—The 21 per cent that turns the 79 per cent of nitrogenous food into bone, muscle and tissue. There is the enchantment of drinking it as well.

In "Splits" as well as regular size bottles.  
Hotels, Restaurants, Cafes, Clubs and Dealers.  
**C. H. EVANS & SONS.** Established 1786.  
Brewery and Bottling Works, Hudson, N. Y.

## GROW MUSHROOMS

For Big and Quick Profits.



Ten years experience enables me to give practical instructions that will add \$5 to \$60 per week to your income without interfering with regular occupation. For full particulars and free book, address

**JACKSON MUSHROOM FARM**  
6015 N. Western Ave., Chicago, Ills.



## DO YOU LIKE TO DRAW?

That's all we want to know. Now, we will not give you any grand prize—or a lot of free stuff if you answer this ad. Nor do we claim to make you rich in a week. But if you are anxious to develop your talent with a successful cartoonist, so you can make money, send a copy of this picture with \$6. in stamps for **portfolios of cartoons and sample lesson plate**, and let us explain. **THE W. L. EVANS SCHOOL OF CARTOONING**  
311 Kingmoore Bldg., Cleveland, O.

## FREE

A Genuine Uncut  
Arizona Ruby FREE



## RUBY

Only One to Each  
Person—WRITE TODAY

We will send you a beautiful **Genuine Arizona Ruby**, uncut, just as sold to us by the Navajo Indians. **FREE**, on request, to introduce to you our genuine **Mexican Diamonds**. These gems look and wear as well as finest South African Diamonds yet cost 1-30th the price. Experts seldom can distinguish between the two. Stand acid and other tests, perfectly cut and polished, and their dazzling, blue-white brilliancy is **Guaranteed Permanent**.

**SPECIAL APPROVAL OFFER**  
Send \$1.00 on account as evidence of good faith, and we will express you **charges all prepaid** a 1/4 carat stone in solid gold ladies' ring, for a special introductory price of \$4.95 (usual cost \$7.50). A 1 carat stone in gent's solid gold heavy Belcher ring (round Belcher or Tooth Belcher style) for \$11.50 (usual cost \$15.00). Examine the ring and our guarantee that accompanies it, and if quite satisfied, pay our special price as above quoted, less your \$1.00 prepayment. State size worn. Order quickly.

Write today for this Free Ruby and our **FREE Illustrated Catalogue** and **FREE Examination Offer**.

**MEXICAN DIAMOND IMPORTING COMPANY**  
Dept. E53R Los Cruces, New Mexico



## "My Policies"

It's exceedingly hard to make a good cigaret and sell it at popular prices.

So hard that only a few people try it.

So hard that most of those who try it fail, and either go out of business or "do like the rest of them" and cut the quality.

So hard that we (my partners and I) went without *a profit for five years*, and put tens of thousands of dollars

into the business, in order to keep up the quality and build the business to a volume

which would leave us a net profit out of the mighty small gross margin in a *quality* cigaret.

I have always believed that if we produced the quality, the public would produce the sales. And that faith has been justified.

Our advertising is *intended* and our salesmen are *instructed* to produce *public confidence rather than sales*. If we can do that the sales will take care of themselves. You will always find in

## MAKAROFF RUSSIAN CIGARETS

a quality that corresponds with the straightforwardness of the advertising. We have now introduced the goods so thoroughly to dealers that you can get them almost anywhere in the best cigar stores, hotels, cafes, dining cars, etc. Any dealer who hasn't got them can get them quickly from his local jobber. If he doesn't want to, we will supply you promptly, by mail, on receipt of the dealer's name and address, or simply his address, so that we may investigate his reason for refusal.

If you do not like these cigarets at the first trial, remember that they are mighty different from what you are accustomed to, and that *the difference is all in your favor*. Take time to get a little used to them and you will find out just what we mean.

Makaroffs are absolutely pure, clean, sweet, mild *tobacco, untouched by anything whatever* to give them artificial flavor, sweetness, or to make them burn. You will find that you can smoke as many as you want of them without any of the nervousness, depression or "craving" that follows the use of ordinary cigarets.

*Pure tobacco won't hurt you.* You may not be used to it, and you may not like the first Makaroff, but you'll like the second one better, and you'll stick to Makaroffs forever if you once give them a fair chance. We have built this business on quality in the goods and intelligence in the smoker—a combination that simply can't lose. We waited quite a while, but it has won in our case and won big.

Ask your dealer for Makaroffs.

15 cents and a quarter in boxes of ten.

*Makaroff - Boston*

Mail address, 95 Milk Street—Boston, Mass.



SOLD ONLY IN 1,2 AND 3 POUND ALL-TIN CANS. THIS BRAND IS NEVER SOLD IN BULK.

GUARANTEED TO BE IN PRIME CONDITION AND GENUINE IF LABEL IS UNBROKEN.

**SUITS WHEN OTHERS DISAPPOINT**

**FREE** If YOU do not happen to know "White House", pray permit us to send you a liberal sample together with our "Tested Recipes" for coffee and tea making. Just address the nearer-to-you of our two offices, and kindly give your grocer's name and mention THE magazine in which you note offer.

-BOSTON- 311 SUMMER ST. **DWINELL-WRIGHT COMPANY** -CHICAGO- 57 MICHIGAN AVE.

## Why Not Be A Nurse?



**TRULY TRAINED.** Beginners, practical nurses and hospital graduates accepted. You are entitled to the best. Write today for booklet telling all about nursing, sent free. Chicago School of Nursing, 1206-46 Van Buren St., Chicago



### COPY THIS SKETCH


and let me see what you can do with it. You can earn \$20.00 to \$125.00 or more, per week as illustrator or cartoonist. My practical system of personal individual lessons by mail will develop your talent. Fifteen years successful work for newspapers and magazines qualifies me to teach you.

Send me your sketch of President Taft with 6c in Stamps and I will send you a test lesson plate, also collection of drawings showing possibilities for YOU

**The Landon School** of Illustrating and Cartooning  
1432 Scholfield Bldg., Cleveland, O.

**THE LATEST IN MUSIC**  
Write for our big illustrated catalogue containing latest song hits and instrumental numbers. We are the largest publishers of popular music in the world. Mail orders filled if your dealer can't supply you. This catalogue is free. We want you to have it.

**JEROME H. REMICK & CO.**  
43 Farrar St. Detroit, Mich.



**FRESH FROM THE OCEAN**  
In Parchment Lined Sanitary Tins

**BURNHAM & MORRILL**  
**FISH FLAKES**

The new and only way to buy Codfish  
A revelation for making  
**CODFISH BALLS-CREAMED FISH-FISH HASH, ETC.**

Sold by up-to-date Grocers everywhere. Send for free booklet, "Good Eating."  
**Burnham & Morrill Co., Portland, Maine, U. S. A.**

10" and 15" sizes

THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE THE GREAT SHOP WINDOW OF AMERICA



## When Life is in The Spring Time

Health and strength seem ever present. But there comes a time in the life of all of us when the up-building powers of Barley-Malt and Saazer Hops as found in

ANHEUSER BUSCH'S  
*Malt-Nutrine*

becomes absolutely necessary. It feeds the life cells—renews in the bloodless and poorly nourished a feeling that new life beats strong within them.

*Declared by U. S. Revenue Department A Pure Malt Product and not an alcoholic beverage. Sold by druggists and grocers.*

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From America's Most Famous Spring,  
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Maid or matron can *always* look young and lovely in spite of years and trying weather by faithfully using this most effective beauty aid.

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Removes Tan, Pimples, Freckles, Moth Patches, Rash, and Skin diseases, and every blemish on beauty, and defies detection. It has stood the test of 62 years, and is so harmless we taste it

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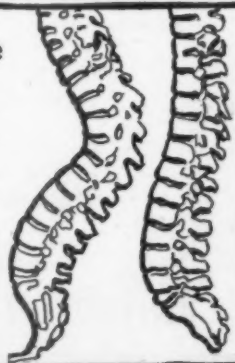
It is no longer necessary to go to a sanitarium and undergo great expense and painful methods in order to correct crooked spine, hunchback and other spinal defects. By means of the wonderful Sheldon Method used in the privacy of the home, we have straightened crooked spines in babies from **two years old to sufferers over 80 years of age.** It makes no difference what your age or what the cause of the defect, whether it is of recent development or of long standing. The Sheldon Method has revolutionized the treatment of spinal deformity. It relieves pressure at the seat of trouble, makes the cartilage expand, relieves soreness and the spine straightens without pain or discomfort. The results have been so remarkable that

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